

FROM CURRICULAR AUTONOMY TO CURRICULAR ALIGNMENT:
DOCUMENTING A PROCESS OF CHANGE AT A LARGE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

by

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ABSTRACT

FROM CURRICULAR AUTONOMY TO CURRICULAR ALIGNMENT: DOCUMENTING A PROCESS OF CHANGE AT A LARGE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

Rebecca Siegel Wagner

This qualitative study was designed to explore and understand the perceptions of 27 faculty members at a large independent school that were involved with a curricular alignment initiative during the 2017-2018 academic year.

The sources of data for this study were curricular documents, observations of curriculum meetings, and face-to-face in-depth interviews. The researcher sought to gain an understanding for how a large independent school manages the tension between teacher autonomy and curricular alignment. The curricular initiative signaled a shift in faculty culture and work at a school where teacher autonomy was greatly valued.

Key findings of this study were that tensions existed in areas such as philosophy, leadership, accountability, and collaboration that contributed to the challenge of developing an aligned curriculum.

Principal recommendations include: development of a shared philosophy of education and instructional vision coupled with a well-defined organizational structure are perceived by faculty members as essential components for organizational change. Focused initiatives, ample time, and adequate professional development were also determined to be critical components for administrators to consider when embarking on change efforts within their school communities.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my wonderful parents,
and to my patient husband and our delightful and inspiring children.

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First, I must acknowledge the men and women who participated in this study by generously sharing their time and experiences. Your creativity, persistence, expertise, and honesty have truly inspired me.

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RSW

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Background and Context

It is evident that the purpose of schooling is difficult to delimit and shifts depending on the values of the local community, political and economic motivations, and social and cultural developments. Designing curriculum to cultivate the skills, knowledge, and social and cultural needs for any given community is a challenging task for educators and respective school stakeholders, often including politicians and corporate organizations. Teachers are regularly exposed to external pressures that impact their practice and influence pedagogical beliefs and are increasingly being held accountable for student achievement (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, & Heilig, 2005; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (ESEA), and later the enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2002, focused American public schools on standardizing and measuring curricular goals and achievement outcomes for all students. These strict accountability measures in public schools served to limit individual decision making opportunities for teachers within their schools and classrooms (Wills & Sandholtz, 2009).

In contrast to mandated curricular constraints in America's public schools, independent schools are uniquely situated to consider the purpose of schooling and subsequent curricular design. Granted a higher degree of autonomy and often educating a comparatively homogeneous student body compared with public schools, independent schools are able to establish their own academic cultures and missions. Some parents carefully select independent schools for their children based on these distinctions, choosing to forego federally-regulated educational

opportunities offered in their communities (Bayer, 2009). Decentralized decision making in independent schools allows for varied curricular development processes and desired educational outcomes. Educators working in independent schools generally enjoy high levels of curricular autonomy and exercise professional discretion when making decisions for their students than their public-school counterparts (Torres & Pruce, 2017). As implied by their categorization as “independent”, schools in the private sector are primarily funded by tuition dollars, and are not accountable to state or national curriculum directives.

What is curriculum?

A school’s curriculum is the foundation on which the instructional program is built. The curriculum directly reflects the purpose and goals for schooling as established by the community for which the school serves. A school’s curriculum not only encompasses the traditional course of study offered in a school’s classrooms, but also the embedded experiences to which students are exposed throughout their formal schooling. To these ends, curriculum includes programs such as character education, performance arts, service learning opportunities, and school-sponsored travel abroad.

The understanding and definition of curriculum varies depending on the context. Wiles (2008) wrote “professionals working in the field of curriculum do not fully agree on the definition of the term” (p.2). He explained that some educators consider curriculum to be textbooks, course syllabi, and other materials that teachers use for classroom instruction. Assuming this definition, a school’s curriculum may be driven by specific textbooks or educational programs that are selected and purchased to teach subjects and produce desired outcomes.

Pinar (2012) suggested a broader view of curriculum. He wrote that curriculum is a way for students to make sense of the world in which they reside, and a vehicle for “complicated conversation” between student and teacher (p.2). The focus on “educational experience” and the presence of “communication informed by academic knowledge” are drivers for his critique of current educational reform in the United States (Pinar, 2012, p.2). Wiles (2009) endorsed a comprehensive definition of curriculum as “a set of desired goals or values that are activated through a development process and culminate in successful learning experiences for students” (p.2).

Goodlad (1984/2004) made the distinction between explicit and implicit curriculum, with the explicit curriculum described as tangibles such as curriculum guides, course listings, and specific textbooks. The implicit school curriculum is explained as the methods or techniques used to teach the explicit curriculum, including the underlying desired outcomes. For example, cooperative learning activities may be considered part of the implicit curriculum, with the goals being improved communication and collaboration skills (Goodlad, 1984/2004). Likewise, Glatthorn, Boschee, Whitehead, and Boschee (2015) provided various definitions of prescriptive and descriptive curriculum, with the primary distinction being that a prescriptive curriculum is the plan of what *ought* to happen, while the descriptive curricula are actual school experiences.

In summary, curriculum theorists and scholars concurred that curriculum provides a path, or statement of intent, for educators as they plan their work with students (Glatthorn et al., Goodson, 1988; Jacobs, 2010; Marzano, 2003). Dewey (1916) acknowledged that historically, there have been groups that supported school improvements to the existing programs, and those that argued for more radical reform to adapt to contemporary societal values and economic

demands. Ultimately, public school curricula in the United States are the responsibility of local and state Boards of Education.

Unlike their public-school counterparts, independent schools have the latitude to develop unique curricula to serve their student populations. Not controlled by local or state Boards of Education, nor reliant on public funding, curriculum development is school-based and may include members of the school community including faculty, administrators and other constituents (Choy & National Center for Education Statistics, 1997; Jorgenson, 2006).

Problem Statement

Independent schools function as autonomous institutions and are not constrained by mandates from state Boards of Education. Nonetheless, independent school leaders are responsible for leading the development of school curriculum that reflects the values or goals of the school community. *The primary research problem for this study was to gain an understanding for how school leaders at a large independent school anticipated, planned for, and managed the tension between teacher autonomy and curricular alignment.*

Like many independent schools where autonomy is valued, the current Lower School (K-8) program at Pacific View Academy (a pseudonym), a large independent school in Hawai'i, is varied and dependent on teacher expertise and interest. Prescribed site-based curriculum documents exist at the school; however, the administration and faculty acknowledge that the elementary program is not aligned within or between grades, and faculty members exercise significant autonomy when making curricular decisions for individual classrooms. For example, it is not uncommon for six teachers at one grade level to identify their own math objectives and to teach those skills from six different math programs. A faculty member described her incoming class at the beginning of the school year as being composed of students from six different

schools even though all of them had been taught at Pacific View Academy (PVA) the previous year. The lack of consistent teacher and programmatic evaluation in the Lower School, along with the recent changes in Lower School administrative structure, has created a dearth of knowledge about what is happening in classrooms and what instruction is being delivered.

Pacific View Academy completed the accreditation process through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges [WASC] and Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools [HAIS] organizations during the 2015-2016 school year. The multi-year self-study and subsequent visits from the accreditation team identified several areas of opportunity that required focused attention from the administration and faculty. With respect to the curriculum, the accreditation process resulted in a programmatic recommendation for the school to “harness the creative tension between autonomy and coherence” (Pacific View Academy, 2015, p.4).

Based on recommendations from the WASC accreditation process, paired with a significant turnover in leadership, the Pacific View Academy Lower School administrative team launched a curriculum development initiative in the spring of 2017. The goal of the project was to review and align the existing program to create a curriculum that is “guaranteed, viable, and articulates what students need to know and be able to do” (Marzano, 2003, p. 19). Overseeing the curriculum review and development process was the Lower School Assistant Principal/Dean of Curriculum.

Drawing on Bidwell, Frank, & Quiroz's (1997) study of the organizational structures of schools, Pacific View Academy is characterized as having a large size and high relative client power. This distinction is consistent with high levels of teacher autonomy and an impersonal workspace that is responsive to client demand, thus creating a market-controlled organization (Bidwell et al., 1997). Bidwell et al. (1997) suggested that teachers in market-oriented schools

compete for the support of students and families and feel “pressure to build and retain a student following”. Teachers in the Lower School at Pacific View Academy enjoy significant autonomy and teach to their strengths, which has resulted in elementary faculty members developing reputations for their individual classroom programs.

With respect to school reform efforts, Cuban (1986) proposed that curriculum and pedagogical alignment requires significant attention to organizational arrangements. He argued that school reformers who do not address school organization risk unanticipated consequences such as pedagogical “freeze” (Cuban, 1986). School leaders need to consider not only curriculum, but also the use of time and school spaces when designing the instructional program. Without looking at the organization as a whole, Cuban (1986) suggested that changes will not take hold and teachers may become more entrenched in their current practices.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the curriculum development process at a large independent school through an exploration of the ways in which educational leaders negotiate the tensions between creative autonomy and curricular coherence. Specifically, this study examines faculty perceptions for how leadership plans and facilitates the development of a “guaranteed and viable” curriculum (Marzano, 2003). Administrators at Pacific View Academy were guided by Marzano’s (2003) statements that curriculum is guaranteed when it consists of clear standards and indicators within an academic discipline at each grade level. Furthermore, a viable curriculum is one in which articulated content and skills can be taught and learned within the time allotted (Marzano, 2003).

The research objective was to understand how school leadership initiates and implements a curricular change in the Lower School (K-8) division. The research questions that were explored were:

- 1. What is leadership's role in curricular change?*
- 2. How are curricular decisions made at a large independent school?*
- 3. How are the tensions between creative autonomy and curricular alignment addressed?*
- 4. What are teacher perceptions of the curricular change process?*
- 5. Who or what is driving the shift from curricular autonomy to curricular alignment?*

Need and Significance of the Study

This topic for research is important because it served to create a better understanding of how a large independent school navigates a curricular change. This study drew upon organizational change and school culture scholarship. Because independent schools operate autonomously from local governments, it is logical that the leadership initiating curricular changes approached the process differently than their counterparts in the public sector. It was expected that factors such as school leadership, faculty perceptions, faculty expertise, and participating stakeholders were site dependent, however the findings of this qualitative study may provide school administrators with valuable recommendations for how to proceed when considering a significant curricular shift.

An additional outcome of this study may be an increased understanding of school culture with respect to faculty work conditions in the context of teacher collaboration. By focusing on a shift to curricular alignment, school administrators will need to address the current school culture, which has effectively promoted teacher autonomy within Lower School classrooms.

Examining faculty perceptions about school culture may help school administrators facilitate the change from teachers working in relative isolation to a culture of collaboration.

Terminology

Autonomy. Freedom from outside control for a teacher to make instructional and curricular decisions based on student needs and teacher strengths.

Curricular Alignment. The process of intentionally defining relationships between curricular objectives, instructional activities and materials, and assessments within and among grade levels.

Curriculum. The plans for guiding learning in schools including actual documentation of scope, sequence and objectives, and the experiences of the learner as recorded by an observer.

Independent School. A school that does not rely on public funding or governance, and is therefore released from state and national educational mandates. Independent schools are overseen by a board of trustees and are financed using tuition dollars and charitable donations. Independent schools in the United States are accredited by the National Association for Independent Schools [NAIS] and other regional accrediting bodies.

Institution. The social, economic, and political structures external to organizations which exert pressures that impact an organization's characteristics (Turner & Angulo, 2018).

Instructional Leader. A member of the school community who leads learning communities by creating a culture of continuous learning for adults with the goal of promoting student learning (Blase & Blase, 2000; Fullan, 2016).

Lower School. The Lower School serves grades Kindergarten through eight. The Lower School leadership team includes the principal, two assistant principals, and six academic deans. The enrollment in the Lower School is about two thousand students.

Upper School. The Upper School serves grades nine through twelve. The Upper School leadership team includes the principal, two assistant principals, and eight class deans. The enrollment in the Upper School is one thousand seven hundred and fifty students.

School Leadership. School leadership includes administrators in positions of authority at the school with specific administrative duties. For this study, school leadership includes the board of trustees, president, principals, assistant principals, administrative deans and department chairs.

Site-based. A school governance model where decisions are made at the school-level with actors that include trustees, administrators, teachers, parents, students and other members of the school community.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This literature review was organized into two sections to report the research relevant to understanding organizational change and how an independent school undertakes the shift from teacher autonomy to curricular alignment. The first section reviewed theories of organizational change and various models for change, and included the rationale for the organizational perspective that was espoused for the purpose of this study. The second section explored independent school organizations and presented research findings that explained why private sector schools tended to have high degrees of teacher autonomy. The second part of the review also included research about teacher communities and working conditions that enabled teachers to exercise high levels of decision-making within their classrooms and schools.

The researcher used print resources and online resources available through the University of Hawai'i Libraries, starting with writing produced in 1916 by John Dewey. Research journals and texts that focused on organizational change theory, school organizations, and teacher autonomy and collaboration were highlighted. Key search terms included *organizational change*, *educational organizations*, *teacher autonomy*, *institutional theory*, *curriculum alignment*, and *teacher collaboration*. The online literature was retrieved largely through online resources available through the University of Hawai'i, including Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) and ProQuest.

Section 1: Organizational Change Theories

Although theories of organizational change are varied, some common understandings have been identified to help managers recognize the drivers for change and the needs at the organizational, group, and individual levels. Specifically, those who study change theories and processes agreed that organizations are influenced, and ultimately react to external environmental changes (Burke, 2018; Schein, 2010; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995; Weick, 1976, Hanson, 2001). Assuming that an organization operates as an autonomous entity within a larger system, organizations are influenced and shaped by societal values and expectations, changing economic markets, and political pressure. Response to external influences can be planned or unplanned, may involve the whole organization or subunits, and may be incremental, continuous, or loosely coupled. Schools are particularly susceptible to societal influences and are regularly subjected to ritual classifications of the curriculum, students, teachers and administration (Meyer & Rowan, 1983).

Change may be addressed through different approaches depending on factors like leadership style and experience, type of organization, and desired outcomes. Managers may consider who the change is directed towards - the individual, a subgroup, or the total system. The extent or scale of change can occur through a series of small continuous adjustments towards an ultimate goal. Conversely change may transpire by way of a significant transformational innovation that challenges the existing norms or values and produces a paradigmatic shift in the way work is conducted. When planning for change, leadership must consider the scope, content, and audience for which organizations are targeting change.

Magnitude of Change

Determining the magnitude of organizational change is critical for managers. Distinctions between transactional change and transformational change are necessary because different techniques are employed in efforts to develop successful change.

Transactional

Transactional change is characterized as a series of small steps that occur continuously within an organization as responses to environmental influences. Transactional change is also called evolutionary change or continuous change in organizational change literature (Burke, 2018; Weick & Quinn, 1999). The incremental improvements are attempts to advance parts of the organization, but ultimately the deep structure, values and norms remain intact. Evolutionary change assumes that systems are tightly-coupled where the work in one part of the organization significantly impacts the work in every other part, and therefore small continuous changes may result in an overall more substantial change to the system itself (Weick & Quinn, 1999). Weick (1976) proposed that schools are loosely coupled systems that allow some parts of the organization to localize adaptations without affecting other elements of the system. Transactional changes are more common in the context of education given that small adjustments are more likely to be accepted than systemic reform.

The nature of loosely coupled systems within school organizations allows administrators to continually adjust management practices, policies and procedures, and task requirements to react and adapt to external influences (Kezar, 2001). Transactional factors often require short term attention and focus on organizational variables that control employee performance (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999). Furthermore, continuous adjustments that are confined to

departments or divisions within a school serve as important units of innovation that may diffuse in future conditions (Weick & Quinn, 1999).

Transformational

Organizational changes that affect the deep structures, norms or existing values are considered transformational (Weick & Quinn, 1999). Transformational change is episodic in that there is a radical jolt to the system, usually from an external source, that prompts the organization to react and plan for change in mission, culture, or strategy. Transformational change is extreme in nature, and often referred to as revolutionary. Characteristics of revolutionary change include alteration to the fundamental, deep structure of a system. These changes can occur at the individual, group, or organizational levels, but all will produce an outcome that is significantly different from the initial system. Sweeping school reform initiatives such as No Child Left Behind and Common Core are examples of transformational change efforts.

Levels of Change

Burke (2018) suggested leaders consider the level at which change is focused: individual, group, and system. Delineating the starting point for change allows managers to more effectively plan, implement, and assess change efforts based on desired outcomes. Burke (2018) further stated that organizations are complex and are generally comprised of networks within networks. Understanding change using these three broad levels offers managers opportunities to focus change for maximum impact.

Individual

Burke (2018) posited that changes directed towards individuals are intended to move an organization to its intended goals. Many organizations miss this mark and instead, change efforts

begin and end without impacting the total system. To effectively manage change at the individual level therefore, it is necessary for administrators to carefully plan changes that support school goals. Literature suggests that change efforts at the individual level appear to involve two domains: roles and behaviors.

The recruitment, selection, replacement, and displacement of individuals within an organization involves defining the roles of employees with respect to an organizational change effort. Burke (2018) explained that for organizations to move change processes forward it is necessary to have “the right people in the right roles” (p. 102). Recruiting and selecting faculty, staff, and mid-level administrators that support a school’s mission and values circumvents the resistance that may arise when revolutionary change efforts are initiated. Similarly, replacing employees as a result of early retirements or attrition may support organizational changes at the individual level. Burke (2018) noted that recruiting new leadership from within or outside an industry frequently serves as a way to refresh a system with new energy. Using these tactics, organizational change is promoted because people have been deliberately placed in roles to support change efforts.

Individual behaviors are frequently the target of organizational change efforts. Both training and development programs and coaching and counseling initiatives are designed to advance individual motivation and productivity within a system. Training and professional development programs that might employ methods like role-play, team building, or workshops are most often directed towards mid-level administrative positions in order to develop strong leadership at the group level (Burke, 2018). Likewise, coaching and counseling methods attempt to integrate individual improvement goals with change initiatives at the organization level. Coaching techniques include informal meetings and regular feedback focused on skills,

performance, development, or goals (Burke, 2018). Based on his research on leadership development using coaching models, Witherspoon (2014) noted that training programs are most often associated with first-order, or evolutionary change, while coaching initiatives can lead to double-loop learning and revolutionary change.

Researchers have produced a considerable body of literature regarding individuals' reactions to organizational change. For instructional leaders leading change efforts, understanding that individuals' willingness or resistance to change is emotionally charged is of particular importance (Kanter, Stein, & Jick, 2003). Burke (2018) noted that change efforts often fail due to inattention to the psychological needs of employees. Embracing change requires employees to significantly shift paradigms, which can mimic the stages of mourning; from denial towards acceptance (Burke, 2018). Furthermore, identifying types of individual resistance to change determines managers' approaches to facilitating organizational change.

Group

The group level of an organization is the primary interface between the individual and total system (Burke, 2018). In schools, groups may consist of grade-level colleagues or curricular departments. At this level, social relationships, shared goals, and political affiliations are determined. Work groups are comprised of individuals whose specialties merge to produce more efficient functions within a system. Ideological shifts initiated by groups in support of common shared values and ideals often set the stage for dialectical change, although change at the group level in loosely-coupled systems may not manifest in apparent change at the organizational level (Schein, 2010).

Integral to groups is the individual's agreement to uphold group norms. Shared experiences, values and adherence to group norms creates units within the organization that may

be particularly supportive or resistant to change efforts (Burke, 2018). Approaching change at the group level requires school administrators to employ techniques that are focused on preserving or strengthening group social dynamics while addressing goals, roles, and processes. Groups that are cohesive and enjoy a relatively autonomous work culture may require a team building approach to understand the group's function within the larger system. Similarly, unified groups may have difficulty accepting new members or integrating new strategies (Kanter et al., 2003).

Burke (2018) wrote the “demand for organizations to be as flexible and adaptable as possible for future survival” is a driver for the emergence of self-directed groups (p.119). Specifically, the elimination of mid-level managerial positions has given rise to self-managed groups with shared leadership structures. Self-directed work groups rely on individual personal responsibility and a willingness of members to productively manage differences and conflicts. Developing a supportive environment where group members can thrive individually and as a unit is imperative for self-directed groups to successfully manage organizational change.

Resistance to organizational change at the group level manifests itself in four primary domains (Burke, 2018). Groups may scramble to protect or insulate their domain from change initiatives that jeopardize its survival within the organization. Similarly, departments that are threatened with restructuring may close ranks to preserve the group. Two extreme reactions to change may be that a group chooses to leave a system altogether to join a new organization or a group may demand new leadership when the current leader is deemed incapable of directing a change effort (Kanter et al., 2003). Although these scenarios may seem unlikely within a school setting, a particular grade level or department may resist change and make the process difficult for principals to move forward with new initiatives. For example, college departments that face

elimination may recruit supporters or engage alumni to provide resistance and preserve their existence.

System

Organizational change is seldom initiated at the system level, but instead begins with individuals and groups (Burke, 2018). Nevertheless, studying change through a systems lens considers environmental influences that guide goal setting, decision making, and outcomes (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Organizations that employ an open-system model subscribe to the underlying belief that all parts of the system are related and are working towards a common goal.

Katz and Kahn (1978) describe the open-system as a cycle of activity that involves input, throughput, and output. For a human organization, the energy that is derived from the external environment might “include money, raw materials, or the work of people” (Burke, 2018, p.55). Certainly, in an open market system of education, external influences can drive organizations at the system level to consider change. For example, changes in the economy may affect families’ abilities to pay tuition, therefore stimulating systemic change for a school that relies on tuition money.

Organizational leadership must decide what parts of the organization, or content, requires attention and plan accordingly. For leaders that are considering discontinuous change content, factors that affect the deep structure of the organization must be considered. Leaders who feel that changes are more transactional, or continuous, will focus on content that affects daily operations of the organization like information technology and work flow processes (Burke, 2018). Burke (2018) noted that successful organizations prefer to hold on to content that has assured the company success, despite the possibilities of “radical changes in their organization’s external environment” (p. 172). The danger of clinging to an organizational model without

considering change is that it may become outmoded before leadership realizes that change is due to remain competitive within the market.

Types of Change

The research and literature on organizational change includes perspectives from various disciplines. Change is categorized by content, level or depth of change, processes, models, and strategies. To these ends, the research is extensive and requires agents of change to develop a deeper understanding for change when considering how and what they are hoping to change within their respective organizations.

The foundational aspects of change include the types, levels, and scope. Van de Ven and Poole (1995) described change as multi-layered and complex, and cautioned that organizations must consider multiple processes occurring simultaneously and to various degrees. The complex nature of change suggests that no single model or prescription for change is complete, and in fact, hybrids are often developed.

The most basic distinctions of change assert that specific characteristics are assigned to one type of change or another using opposing values. For example, change can be incremental or discontinuous, evolutionary or revolutionary, continuous or episodic (Burke, 2018). Burke (2018) further delineated change as content and process, while Van de Ven and Poole (1985) distilled types of change into domains: life-cycle, teleological, dialectical, and evolutionary. Kezar (2001) added social cognition and cultural categories to Van de Ven and Poole's (1995) typology. Contributions by Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Bidwell (2001) were reflected upon when considering educational change. The following sections describe different schools of thought for organizational change theory.

Life Cycle

The life cycle theory posits that an organization, like a living organism, passes through a linear set of predetermined phases, ensuring that change is inevitable (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). The change process is predominantly linear and irreversible, yet the organization maintains its intended identity as it passes through the phases. Griener (1972) theorized that all organizations experience five distinct stages as part of the life cycle, incorporating periods of revolutionary and evolutionary change. Each stage is characterized by a period of slow, steady growth punctuated by a crisis period that forces radical change. Moreover, subsequent phases of growth may only be reached once development of the previous stage has been exhausted (Greiner, 1972).

The initial phase of Greiner's (1998) model is creativity. Characteristics of this phase include a highly motivated leadership team, long work hours, frequent communication among team members, and a desire to produce output that is in demand. This phase in the model is when growth is the most rapid, reflecting human stages of youth and adolescence. As productivity increases and the organization finds initial success, securing more resources becomes critical for continued growth, which Greiner (1998) argued creates a crisis of leadership, leading to a condition for clarification in direction, and eventually, the second phase of an organization's life cycle.

The second phase involves the development of formal processes for day-to-day organizational operations and communication. The growth of the organization centralizes management and decision making, leading to the loss of autonomy, but greater efficiency. This phase mimics early adulthood when it is presumed that humans have acquired higher levels of knowledge and productivity. As an organization grows larger and workers become more

complacent, or comfortable in their positions, a period of restructuring resulting in delegation or subsequent decentralization begins (Greiner, 1972).

This third phase yields expansive growth as managers are afforded latitude to make decisions that promote their units within the organization. The leadership crisis that signals a need for change is the lack of coordination between individual groups. The result of this third phase is a period of readjustment with the goal of coordination.

The fourth phase in the life cycle requires departments within the organization to integrate in an effort to create efficiency and coordination of resources. The final phase of the life cycle is collaboration. The centralization and efforts to run efficiently in phase four create a crisis of bureaucracy, or what Greiner calls a “red-tape crisis” (Greiner, 1972). The final stage of the life-cycle theory leads to change for which Greiner (1998) speculates organizations will develop new structures to support employee reflection and renewal.

While the life cycle theory considers that organizations change and grow over time, the application to educational organizations may not be practical. School organizations may experience periods of significant development however, it is not expected that they are moving towards an end where they will eventually be terminated.

Teleological Theory

A teleological approach to organizational change assumes that organizations are purposeful and adaptive. Teleological theory is commonly referred to as scientific management or planned change, and adopts a rational, linear approach that puts leadership at the center of the change process. Furthermore, Van de Ven and Poole (1995) distinguished teleological theory by describing it as a process that is based on repeated “goal formulation, implementation, evaluation, and modification of goals based on what was learned or intended by the entity”

(p.516). Specifically, the goal, or end product, is motivation for change within an organization (Burke, 2018).

A teleological approach involves continuous adaptations towards improvement, and is equally effective for individuals, groups, or systems that are like-minded. This model sees the leader of the organization instigating a process that involves the creation and alignment of goals, planning, implementation of the change plan, analysis of success, and modification of plan based on the ongoing experiences towards goal attainment (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). If the goals for the organization are achieved, the organization does not remain in permanent equilibrium. Instead, the process begins again based on feedback from the external or internal environments (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). The outcome of the teleological process is comparable to the evolutionary model in that new structures are created in order to create a more efficient and productive organization (Kezar, 2001).

A teleological approach to change is rational and linear, but in contrast to the life cycle theory, teleology does not necessarily follow a prescribed set of stages. Van de Ven and Poole distinguished the teleological process as being guided by assessment towards the end goal. If change activities produce progression towards goal achievement, then the process is successful. Organization leaders continually monitor for goal attainment and revisit the process to create new iterations as needed (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995).

Dialectical

Van de Ven and Poole (1995) explained that dialectical theory assumes “that the organizational entity exists in a pluralistic world of colliding events, forces, or contradictory values that compete with each other for domination and control” (p. 517). Opposing forces may be internal or external, but essentially balance each other and stabilize the organization. Change

is provoked when one entity gains sufficient power, and creative synthesis is established as a means to develop a new way of thinking. Mutually beneficial resolutions using creative synthesis are not always possible, however. In the case that one entity engages in a hostile takeover of another, as seen in business organizations, the consequence of the dialectical process is considered negative (Burke, 2018).

Kezar (2001) made the distinction that dialectical change models and political assumptions are closely linked. A dialectical model assumes that change occurs as opposing forces or perspectives create an impasse that must be resolved (Morgan, 1997). The outcome of a continuous sequence of conflict is a novel solution that creates a new status quo within an organization (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Similarly, systems may be comprised of subgroups that exercise their own micropolitics within the organization.

Dialectical change is prompted through conflicting views or practices, and does not assume that everyone is involved. In times when resources are available and productivity is high, only those who are involved directly in governance may be passionate about change (Morgan, 1997). In contrast, individuals and subgroups mobilize when change is imminent or resources become scarce. Kezar (2001) identified the metaphor for dialectical change as a social movement, focusing on individuals and groups as part of the change process. Changes supported by this model are related to serving the interests of subgroups rather than reacting to influences from the outside environment. Furthermore, this type of change is often seen as a departure from linear and rational models that advance progressively (Kezar, 2001).

Evolutionary

Changes that are ongoing and gradual, and are primarily the result of external environmental stimuli, are considered to be evolutionary. Evolutionary change adheres to the

metaphor developed by Morgan (1997) in which an organization is described in biological terms as an open-system that depends on continual interaction with the external environment.

An open-system model prescribes that like a cell, there are subsystems that support specific functions to maintain viability, however each subsystem is interdependent to ensure survival of the entire organism. Furthermore, the organism and its subsystems are responsive to external influences, which cause the organism to continuously adapt or undergo change, thus creating change to the overall system. Like a cell, an organization's boundaries are permeable and allow for external influences to affect change required for the organization to remain sustainable and strong (Burke, 2018). Moreover, permeable boundaries allow for output from the system to enter the external environment thus creating a cycle of feedback. In contrast, a closed system is isolated and does not exchange energy with the surrounding environment.

A series of continuous adjustments to the organizational structure, practices or policies are considered to be transactional, meaning that the changes are considered to be interventions that help to course-correct and make work more efficient or productive. These transactional changes do not affect the core values, mission, or culture of an organization. Instead, these continuous adjustments are considered first-order changes that represent an evolution. First-order continuous change is also commonly referred to as evolutionary change. In an organization that is tightly coupled, evolutionary changes at the individual level will directly impact work at the group and systems levels, and the effects change may appear more rapidly. If other units within the system are not affected, as with organizations that are loosely coupled, like schools, then changes may be slower, isolated or short-lived.

Designing a plan for evolutionary change is challenging for managers because this type of change is reactionary in nature (Gersick, 1991). It is necessary for leadership to recognize and

understand the potential reasons and causes for evolutionary change in order to support this type of change within an organization. The desire to meet specific goals according to a prescribed timeline may prompt an organization to initiate changes at the individual or group levels (Burke & Litwin, 2016). Pressures to maintain or increase market position may also cause leadership to consider structural or procedural adjustments (Schein, 2010). Another cause for change may be the development of a crisis, in an otherwise stable environment, that requires immediate attention in order for an organization to remain viable (Gersick, 1991).

Social Cognition

A social cognition approach to organizational change considers an individual's desire to change. Developed from a social-constructivist model, the assumption with social cognition, in contrast with other typologies, is that there is not "one single organizational reality that all people generally perceive similarly" (Kezar, 2001, p. 44). Instead, it is assumed that individuals incorporate their own knowledge structures, or schema, with new information to develop rationales for change. Kezar (2001) further explained learning also occurs when prior understandings converge with conflicting knowledge, resulting in cognitive dissonance.

Unlike other models of change where external influences, a leader's vision, or dialectical tension drives change, theorists believe that cognitive dissonance prompts individuals to seek new ways to understand and interpret their worldview. Social cognition approaches distinguish an individual's paradigm shifts or sensemaking as separate from an organization's need for change (Kezar, 2001; Weick, 1995). Leadership, therefore, must examine employee assumptions and reframe and interpret a shared reality or organizational culture. The social construction of the environment leads to multiple realities. Kezar (2001) acknowledged that part of the reason

organizational change is a challenge is due to the understanding that individuals perceive and interpret their environments differently.

Leaders who adopt a social cognition approach facilitate change as a learning process. Affording employees the latitude to shed the belief that there is a single organizational reality that all perceive similarly prompts creativity and innovation (Morgan, 1997). Argyris' (1976) single- and double-loop learning theory reflects a social cognition approach that organizations can leverage to guide change. First-order change reflects single-loop learning often associated with adherence to organizational norms and values (Kezar, 2001). Social cognition change theory supports double-loop learning in which knowledge is expanded through questioning whether institutional goals and processes are effective (Argyris, 1976). Argyris (1976) stressed that in order for an organization to support double-loop learning, a culture of trust must be established. The double-loop model relies heavily on leadership providing honest feedback, shared power, and support for new behaviors (Argyris, 1976).

A benefit for espousing a social cognition approach to organizational change is the consideration for the human aspect of learning and change. Theories that focus on systems, dialectical tensions, life-cycles and teleological structures often discount the individual nature of change (Kezar, 2001). Overwhelmingly, theorists acknowledge that change efforts often fail due to the lack of motivation or understanding at the individual level. Like the dialectical model, the social cognition theory recognizes that the change process is not necessarily linear, and may not always lead to a positive outcome.

Cultural

Kezar (2001) posited that a cultural model of organizational change combines elements of the dialectical and social cognition theories in assuming that workplaces are complex and

irrational. Unlike theories that prescribe primarily linear change processes, a cultural change model involves shifting the values, beliefs, myths and rituals associated with an organization (Schein, 2010). Schein (2010) clarified that while cultural evolution for an organization does occur in stages, planned organizational changes that target culture are more complex and not often the primary change goal.

Schein (2010) defined organizational culture as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (p.18). Simply put, culture is the way things are done in an organization in order to promote success. Consequently, culture is a social construct that incorporates history and traditions at the organization, group, and individual levels.

Cultural change in organizations involves shifting beliefs and paradigms for groups and individuals. Social-cognition approaches help to address collective and shared norms, with managers helping to reframe and interpret organizational values and mission. Similarly, cultural change can be manifested from reinterpretation of cultural beliefs espoused by opposing groups within an organization. This type of change is dialectical in nature and results in the development of a social movement (Kezar, 2001).

Schein (2010) referred to Lewin’s three stage model for managing cultural change, particularly social change at the group and organizational levels. Lewin’s (1958) research on group decision making concluded with the enduring *unfreeze – movement – refreeze* model. Operating on the assumption that most change efforts fail to create long-term improvement,

Lewin (1958) proposed that once a desired new level, or permanency, is achieved, group life at the goal is preserved to prevent the organization from reverting back to the original state.

Institutional

When considering institutional theory within the context of organizational change, it is important to make the distinction between institutions and organizations (Glatter, 2015). For the purposes of this study, institutions are the “social, economic, and political structures external to organizations which exert pressures that impact an organization’s characteristics” (Turner & Angulo, 2018). Therefore, it can be understood that institutional influences help to shape an organization by creating social, cultural and professional norms (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). As a result, institutional theory posits that “people’s actions are shaped, in part, by political and social forces that confer them with some legitimacy” (Renzulli, 2005, p.4). Meyer and Rowan (1977) suggested that organizations are compelled to incorporate practices and procedures that are acknowledged as rational paradigms of organizational work, and therefore widely accepted in society. The result is that organizations attain legitimacy within their communities irrespective of whether their practices and procedures are discernably effective (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Furthermore, Meyer and Rowan (1977) argued that institutionalized organizations that conform to societal expectations or myths are subsequently burdened with keeping up appearances, or sustaining the belief that the work being done is legitimate.

Decoupling formal managerial structures from the technical aspects of teaching and learning allows schools to maintain a buffer between the formal and informal parts of schooling. Specifically, the formal structures legitimize the organization and turn attention away from technical inefficiencies and inconsistencies (Bidwell, 2001; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Weick, 1976). Loose coupling in schools serves several purposes. It allows schools to locally adapt to

various initiatives without involving the entire organization. Adaptations can occur more efficiently, and be less obtrusive. Loose coupling can also foster employee satisfaction and motivation due to the perceived absence of constraints and the delegation of decision making to individuals and groups within the system. With the relative autonomy that is designated to teachers in loosely coupled systems, it is implied there is a slow diffusion of system-wide changes due to the comparative lack of responsiveness within the system as a whole (Ingersoll, 1991; Meyer & Rowan, 1983; Weick, 1995).

Weick (1976) observed that given the significant efforts to reform schools by promoting changes to curriculum, pedagogy, and accountability, relative academic growth within classrooms continues to be remarkably constant. Furthermore, institutional researchers observed that regardless of differences in structures, philosophies, and goals, the construct of *school* is still recognizable and has retained permanence across time (Bidwell, 2001; Ingersoll, 1991; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Weick, 1976). Building on the concept of loose coupling and the conventions of school, institutional theory emerged as a departure from previously rational models of educational organizations.

Although organizational change traditionally involves changes in technologies, structures, and employee behaviors, change agents facilitating this work must consider workplace values and norms in anticipation of how change is received at the employee level (Zilber, 2011). Participants in change may change because it is mandated, while others change because they perceive that it is an expectation. A group of individuals may also change because they value personal growth. These three scenarios act as pillars to organizational change within the context of institutional theory – regulative, normative, and cognitive (Hopkins & Spillane, 2015; Turner & Angulo, 2018). Regulative processes for organizational change in educational

settings may include policy changes and government mandates. Legal obligations are the primary drivers for regulative change and employees change because they *have to* and not because they want to (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996). From a normative standpoint, change occurs because it is the perception that it is socially obligated and that there is a moral obligation to uphold organizational values (Turner & Angulo, 2018). Normative changes occur because employees believe they *ought to* change. Cognitive changes occur when employees internalize change and genuinely *want to* change even if the change is not transpiring due to new policies (regulative) or workplace norms (normative) (Greenwood & Hinings, 1996).

Summary

This section of the review of literature introduced the magnitudes, levels and types of change that may occur within an organizational setting. Magnitude of change was considered transactional or transformational depending on the depth and scope of a change. An alteration to the deep structure, culture or fundamental beliefs held by an organization is considered transformational, while small-continuous changes or adjustments are transactional.

The levels for change that were described in this section include the individual, group, and system levels. Managers that undertake change at the individual levels focus on roles and behaviors, with the intention to create an impact at the group and system levels. Group level changes include the development of shared values and norms. Team-building activities to strengthen social dynamics are often employed at the group level. System-level changes are usually a result of individual and group changes that reflect environmental influences.

The types of change introduced in this section considered the drivers for change, which may result in linear approaches to change. The life-cycle, evolutionary and teleological theories for change involve progressions or planned change where specific stages or steps are followed in

sequence. The dialectical, social cognition, and cultural models for change are comparatively non-linear and do not necessarily follow subscribed stages. Instead, beliefs and shared norms are co-constructed and organizational learning is promoted.

Organizational change viewed through the lens of institutional theory concluded this section by describing how cultural norms and the desire for an organization to gain legitimacy within society shape the initiatives within the organization. Schools are described as loosely coupled systems which implies that change is slow and focused on the formal aspects of the organization, rather than the technical structures.

Theory of Choice

Considering organizational theory as applied to educational settings, researchers summarily question the rational models represented by the evolutionary, teleological, and life-cycle organizational theories. In fact, educational researchers and practitioners agree that organizational change models are not necessarily applicable to school organizations. The rational models do not accurately reflect the complexity and loose coupling of educational institutions (Ingersoll, 1991; Weick, 1976). Furthermore, Bidwell (2001) made a compelling case for applying institutional theory to the school organization.

An institutional theory approach best fits the context of this study. Not only does institutional theory directly relate to change within educational organizations, but it also explicitly acknowledges the ways in which schools manage teacher autonomy through loose coupling. Furthermore, considering that Pacific View Academy already identified tension between teacher autonomy and program alignment in its recent WASC self-study, it is inferred that members of the school community perceive loose coupling between the managerial and technical work at the school.

Models of organizational change assume that individuals, subunits, and groups within the organization are interdependent, meaning that system productivity is affected by work at different levels. The work completed by individuals impacts the work done by a group or subunit, which impacts the total system. In a tightly coupled organization, the direct impacts are evident immediately because a change to an individual's work will have direct bearing on the group. For example, if an accountant changes the system for which she records transactions, this change will need to be communicated to her clients and co-workers, which may change the way their records are kept or transactions are documented. Weick (1976) argued that schools are interdependent organizations, but are not tightly-coupled. Unlike a corporation, a school is composed of relatively autonomous groups of workers that are able to make changes to their work without significantly impacting other groups within the same organization. Weick (1976) suggested that school organizations are loosely coupled, indicating that change efforts are most likely to be concentrated in pockets of the organization, rather than diffuse school-wide.

Of the multitude of organizational change theories, institutional theory most closely aligns with my personal experiences and with the research I planned to conduct at Pacific View Academy. I recognized that school administrators often employed aspects of scientific management to school change, with limited success. The tension between teacher autonomy and alignment is analogous to the loose coupling between the administrative and technical aspects within a school organization (Bidwell, 2001; Meyer & Rowan, 1983). Assuming that a school organization, as a whole, functions rationally is imprudent and simplistic. While certain facets of the school may operate in a purposeful and adaptive manner, the business of teaching and learning is complex and often operates according to a logic of confidence (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Understanding a school organization from an institutional perspective is essential when

considering change initiatives. Furthermore, assessing change initiatives from regulative, normative, and cognitive standpoints helps to further inform change agents as to how recipients of change may react.

Section 2: Independent Schools and Teacher Autonomy

What is an independent school?

Since the 1970s, roughly ten percent of school-aged American children have attended schools in the private school sector (Broughman, Peterson, & Parmer, 2017). While the terms private school and independent school are often used interchangeably, educators have offered a distinction between the two. According to the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), *private school* is an umbrella term for any school that is non-public (NAIS, 2012). Private schools, therefore, can include schools with religious affiliations, trade schools, or for-profit organizations. Moreover, private schools may be “subject to outside governing bodies and external requirements for financial or programmatic decisions” (Balossi & Hernandez, 2015, p.10). For example, private schools may be governed by a church or non-profit organization.

Although many independent schools reflect private school characteristics, they exist as a subset in the private sector and have unique qualities that delineate them from the larger population of private schools. For instance, independent schools are non-profit, self-determining in mission and program, self-sustaining, self-governing, and funded primarily through tuition, charitable donations, and endowment income (Kane, 1992). Independent schools do not typically receive funds or grants from government sources, nor are they obligated to adopt or follow prescribed state and federal curricular standards or accountability schemes. Unlike their public, charter, and for-profit school counterparts, independent schools are not bound by governmental guidelines in any way. Independent schools retain full autonomy for establishing their own

criteria for all aspects of their programming, including mission, values, curriculum, and admission requirements and practices (NAIS, 2012). While not a governing body, NAIS is the primary member organization for independent schools in the United States. Similarly, regional accreditation bodies regularly conduct visits to independent schools according to an accreditation evaluation cycle.

Independent school variations are considerable. Some common organizational models include co-educational, single-gender, boarding, traditional, progressive, and religiously affiliated schools. The common characteristics for independent schools include self-governance, self-support, self-defined curriculum, self-selected students, self-selected faculty, and small size (Kane, 1992). For the purposes of this study, the terms private school and independent school were used interchangeably. I made this decision because of the research on schooling in the private sector includes both private and independent schools, although there are many studies that focus primarily on data from parochial schools. Pacific View Academy, the intended site for my case study, self-identifies as an independent school.

Private schooling and the Common School Movement

Private schooling in America is rooted in the country's historic educational foundations. Until Horace Mann's vision for the common school was realized in early nineteenth century New England, American children were primarily educated according to European norms in which parents were largely responsible for seeking educational opportunities for their own children. This model resulted in decentralized, specialized schools geared towards religious or vocational studies. Schools were led by church assemblies or small groups of like-minded citizens. Such schools were private schools that served small groups of students and taught varying curriculums deemed appropriate for their constituencies.

The Common School movement took hold in the mid-1800s on the premise that colonial and immigrant children should be educated in American values and foundational beliefs by creating a school common to all people (Cremin, 1951). Mann's push to centralize education emerged from the New England urban intellectuals and reformers who believed that education was the path towards promoting equality and social justice. Children attending common schools were to be educated to share similar values, goals, and beliefs (Copeland, 2009). Realizing the common school vision required citizens to embrace higher taxes, secularization, and expanded governmental control. Resistance to Mann's project was widespread particularly from Protestant religious groups and upper-class families who felt that "the private education they enjoyed was far superior to anything the public system could provide" (Meyer, 2006, p. 58). Increased Catholic immigration paired with a push by Mann and his supporters to regulate schooling in the United States created opportunities for government-sponsored schools to take hold (Glenn, 2013).

The common school model persisted in American education, and modern public schools represent Mann's intentions by providing a relatively standardized program to the majority of children in the United States. Public schools are governed by school boards comprised of community members, and funded through taxpayer dollars. Mann and his contemporaries considered education to be a public good that would serve as an equalizing opportunity for children to be "upwardly mobile economically as adult citizens" (Fife, 2016, p.6). Akin to Mann's beliefs, the U.S. Department of Education's current mission statement includes language about providing "equal educational opportunity for every individual" and "preparation for global competitiveness" (U.S Department of Education, 2011).

In spite of the common school movement, parents and educators who desired alternative

educational experiences for their children continued to support private and independent schooling. The right for parents to choose non-government schools was upheld by the United States Supreme Court in 1925 (*Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 1925). At that time, the majority of private schools retained religious or specialized programming to meet the needs of specific populations. Latin grammar schools, academies, country-day schools and Episcopal schools dominated the landscape of private school education at the same time that American public schooling was finding its footing (Boyce, 1929). Furthermore, Boyce (1929) asserted that, “every new movement in secondary education has begun in some private or semi-private institution and only gradually has been adopted by the public high school” (p. 352). It was believed that the role of private schooling in the early part of the twentieth century was to prepare students for college, to provide religious training, and to promote innovations in education. Arguably, many of these roles and functions of private education continue to endure today.

According to the 2017 Private School Universe Survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, nearly seventy percent of private schools in the United States are religiously affiliated (Broughman et al., 2017). Aside from wanting their children to receive religious instruction, parents indicated that they chose private or independent schools for a number of other factors including safety, convenience, and the perception that public schools are failing to prepare students for the future.

Choosing Private Education

Conventional wisdom leads many parents, politicians, school reform advocates, and educators to believe that private school education is superior to public schooling. Indeed, many research studies have shown that private school students score higher on academic achievement exams, and are exposed to a more diverse set of courses and co-curricular offerings at their

schools. Attributes that contribute to these findings include academically advantaged families, motivated parents, and relatively homogenous student bodies (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014). Advocates of public-school reform initiatives regularly try to capitalize on the private school effect by calling for the development of comprehensive voucher systems to introduce a market-like structure for public education. Similarly, the proliferation of charter schools that are publicly funded yet often privately governed, is intended to mimic the organization of private schools (Chubb & Moe, 1990).

Academic Achievement

Groundbreaking studies conducted in the mid-1960s for the U.S. Office of Education concluded that student academic performance was largely attributed to characteristics of a child's background and not characteristics of the schools they attended. In short, school reform efforts such as new policies, curriculum materials and teacher salaries, were not expected to yield significant academic improvement. University of Chicago sociologist, James Coleman and his team suggested that the underlying causes for academic achievement were rooted in a child's environment and the socioeconomic mix in the classroom (Coleman et al., 1966). Coleman's study, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, was intended to inform the American public, educators, and politicians working to desegregate schools and create opportunities for African-Americans and other marginalized groups. The significance of this study for researchers, educators and policy-makers was noteworthy for several reasons. First, Coleman's findings indicated that pumping new resources into schools would not necessarily lead to improved academic achievement. Second, the study provided social scientists a new model to use to begin examining school achievement data in new ways and to consider alternate methodologies for data collection and analysis.

One of the major criticisms of Coleman's work was that the data were cross-sectional and lacked information about student gains (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014). In the 1980s, Coleman co-authored another study, *High School Achievement*, using the High School and Beyond (HSB) data set that compared student academic achievement from public and private schools. Although Coleman's conclusions were widely challenged, the findings indicated, ironically, that perhaps schools did matter and that academic achievement was related to school organization (Chubb & Moe, 1990).

Market theorists John Chubb and Terry Moe built on Coleman's work and concluded that the organization of schools was a significant factor in determining student success. Although they acknowledged that institutional conditions constrained educational reform efforts, Chubb and Moe believed that institutions were susceptible to market forces. Specifically, they believed that certain types of schools performed better with certain organizational characteristics such as clear goals, an ambitious academic program, strong educational leadership, and high levels of teacher professionalism (Chubb & Moe, 1990). According to their analysis, private school organizations achieved these prerequisites through achieving high levels of school autonomy, unlike public schools that were controlled by external bureaucratic influence (Chubb & Moe, 1990).

Lubienski and Lubienski (2014) examined National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and Early Child Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K) math data in an effort to determine whether public or private schools had greater impacts on student achievement. Raw data collected from differing school sectors indicated that private school students scored higher on standardized achievement tests. After controlling for student and school demographics such as socioeconomic status (SES), school location, limited English proficiency (LEP) and disabilities,

and race, their study concluded that public schools succeeded in producing higher levels of student academic achievement than their private school counterparts (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014). The authors contended that the private school effect that was suggested by Coleman (1966) and market theorists Chubb and Moe (1990) accounted for the conclusions that were drawn regarding school organization and high achievement.

The Private School Effect

Aside from student achievement data, other factors that contribute to the belief that independent or private school education is superior to public schooling are increased delocalization, degenerating infrastructure, and taxpayer disillusionment (Baines & Foster, 2006). Similarly, the one best system concept of schooling imagined by Horace Mann has given way to a culture in which citizens are rejecting homogeneity and assimilation, and embracing diversity and personalization (Copeland, 2009). The growing sentiments that the common school ideals of equality and democracy have devolved into achievement gaps and political jockeying, have led to some parents to seek out alternatives to the public schools.

Recent implementation of nationally adopted standards, accountability measures, and financial incentives offered by the federal government have created tensions between local communities and government bureaucrats as to who controls public education. In response to local control being ceded to state and federal boards of education, there has been a proliferation in charter school enrollment as a way for communities to maintain local control. Similarly, voucher and tuition tax credit programs have expanded to offer parents more choice when it comes to weighing educational opportunities for their children (Baines & Foster, 2006).

Researchers cite the “private school effect” as a significant influence on parents considering educational opportunities for their children (Kantor & Lowe, 2011; Lubienski &

Lubienski, 2014; Porfeli, Wang, Audette, McColl, & Algozzine, 2009). Researchers isolated several contributing factors that produce the “private school effect” including, socio-economic status (SES), parent involvement, school safety, school reputation, value systems, convenience, and peer effects (Coleman et al., 1966; Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014). Furthermore, Chubb and Moe (1990) argued that organizational variables such as autonomy and client-orientation allow private schools to operate more effectively and efficiently.

Deeply embedded in the culture of private schools is the expectation that all members of the school community are actively involved in nearly all aspects of school life. Students, parents, faculty members, administrators, alumni, and staff are routinely inculcated in the schools’ mission and values. NAIS (2017) explicitly states on its website that independent schools value inclusive communities that promote and support parent engagement and participation. Similarly, independent schools seek to employ faculty and staff who can wear multiple hats. Coaching sports teams, sponsoring clubs, and chaperoning trips are often expectations for private school employees, with contracts regularly stating that employees may be asked to perform duties not specified in their terms of employment. Indeed, this aspect of working at a private school is often cited by faculty members as being a reason for struggling to maintain a healthy work/life balance (Booth, 2007).

According to Bayer (2009), the implications for the “private school effect” are largely evident in Hawai’i which, due to geographic isolation and the presence of a single public-school system, has amplified conflicting assumptions about private and public education. Nearly seventeen percent of children in Hawai’i were reportedly enrolled in private schools for the 2016-2017 school year (HAIS, 2017; HDOE, 2016). The national average for private school

enrollment has steadily remained at close to ten percent for the past thirty years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017).

Researchers argue that while private school organization enjoys relative autonomy from government bureaucracy, there are potentially negative aspects that reduce the luster of the “private school effect”. Among these factors are lack of credentialed teachers, outdated curricula, and teaching methods (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014). Similarly, the racial and socioeconomic homogeneity of private school student bodies is problematic for some parents that want their children to attend schools with more diversity (Bayer, 2009).

Davies and Quirke (2007) posited that elite or well-known private schools may reside on the periphery of the market competition for students. They argued that schools with long histories that are associated with high-status clientele have a degree of security that renders them more “institutional than resource-hungry schools imagined in market theory” (Davies & Quirke, 2007, p. 69). As discussed in the previous section, an institutionalized environment is represented by loose-coupling, ambiguous goals, and outputs that are hard to measure (Bidwell, 2001; J. Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Weick, 1976). Research suggests that institutions operate using a *logic of confidence* which grants teachers a degree of autonomy, or professional discretion, to avoid close monitoring of instruction, which often exposes inconsistencies and inefficiencies thus affecting organizational legitimacy (Davies & Quirke, 2007).

Lubienski and Lubienski (2014) concluded that increased autonomy afforded to private schools did not result in the employment of innovative teaching practices or cutting-edge curricula. Instead, the autonomous school organization served to insulate faculty members and promote traditional methods and outdated curriculum. The researchers contended that schools in the market-driven sector use their “autonomy to avoid proven curricular reforms drawn from

professional insights on teaching and learning” (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014, p.143). Despite the perceived student benefits due to the “private school effect”, the insularity from public school bureaucracy enjoyed by private school teachers may actually prevent students from benefiting from advances in the larger field of education.

High Quality Teachers and Hiring Practices

A study conducted by Vanderbilt University and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) identified four key characteristics to describe high quality teachers in independent schools (Balossi & Hernandez, 2015). In the report, the researchers acknowledged that the private school sector has significant autonomy in teacher recruitment, teacher selection, and teacher evaluation. In addition, the authors acknowledged that unlike public-school hiring, which is guided by state and federal certification requirements and regulations, independent schools hiring practices are “implicit” (Balossi & Hernandez, 2015, p.7).

Specifically, the study acknowledged that the government requirements for hiring teachers that often guide public school administrators in making hiring decisions are largely absent in independent schools. The autonomy afforded to independent school principals and division heads with respect to hiring is consistent with other aspects of independent school organization. The authors wrote, “underlying assumptions, rather than clear descriptions, often guide selection and retention of teachers in independent schools” (Balossi & Hernandez, 2015, p.7). Furthermore, they revealed that these assumptions were informally constructed using parent and student feedback regarding their satisfaction with the quality of teachers. Employment, recognition, or promotion decisions in independent schools often relied on teacher reputation rather than “valid evaluative measurement and feedback” (Balossi & Hernandez, 2015, p.7).

Regarding characteristics and hiring practices associated with independent schools, the Vanderbilt/NAIS study posited that independent schools have the distinctive ability to establish their own criteria for high quality teachers and guidelines for recruitment and hiring practices. Such schools are primarily accountable to accrediting bodies, trustees, and especially parents who have made intentional choices to enroll their children in independent schools (Balossi & Hernandez, 2015). NAIS identified smaller classes sizes and high-quality teachers as two key reasons that parents consider when selecting independent schools for their children.

Specifically, the Vanderbilt/NAIS study determined four primary teacher attributes valued at independent schools. Participants in the study, including Heads of Schools, division heads, and teachers, concluded that the ability to establish strong relationships with students, demonstration of strong pedagogical knowledge and content expertise, a growth mindset, and authentic commitment, or fit, to school culture were paramount when designating independent school teachers as high quality (Balossi & Hernandez, 2015). Some of the least important considerations for determining teacher quality at an independent school were education, years of teaching experience, and certification. This latter finding is particularly interesting given the body of research that supports the impact of teacher education and certification on student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005).

Regarding hiring at independent schools, practices often include interviews with division heads or principals, department or grade level colleagues, Heads of School, and other stakeholders in formal and informal settings. For instance, a campus tour is often part of a hiring visit, during which candidates can be informally interviewed to uncover characteristics that pertain to cultural fit. Moreover, forty-five percent of the schools surveyed in the Vanderbilt/NAIS study indicated that candidates were *required* to perform a demonstration

lesson as part of their interview process, while only six percent of schools did not use a demonstration lesson at all (Balossi & Hernandez, 2015). The survey results indicated that the demonstration lesson outranks the Head of School interview, suggesting that this part of the hiring process was necessary to help identify not only a candidate's pedagogical and content knowledge, but also how she was able to develop relationships with students.

The recruitment, selection and hiring of independent school teachers continues to be an implicit process, defined and implemented by NAIS institutions using the Principles of Good Practice (PGP) frameworks provided by NAIS (NAIS, Various). The documents, drafted by committees composed of independent school educators, are not considered to be policy statements, but broad guidelines to promote “uniformity within NAIS” (Balossi & Hernandez, 2015)

Teacher Autonomy

American school teachers exercised control over their work in the classroom dating back to the colonial period when public education was dominated by the one-room schoolhouse. Lortie (2002) noted that, “since the schoolhouse was physically separated from the community, the teacher had considerable privacy in the conduct of his day-to-day work” (p. 3). The geographic separation of teachers in one room school houses in early America meant that they often went for long periods of time without associating with other teachers. The proliferation of multiple classroom schools did not result in increased interdependence amongst teachers since most still taught in self-contained classrooms or focused on single subjects.

The early nineteenth century marked a period of substantial growth in public education and saw single, young women entering the teaching ranks. Due to restrictions put in place on the employment of married women, Lortie (2002) concluded that “teaching was institutionalized as

high turnover work” and “required annual infusions of many new members in order to meet the demand created by expansion and high turnover” (p.15). At that time, school administrators valued flexibility and independence and did not actively encourage interdependence amongst their faculties, which in turn reinforced the model of teachers working in relative isolation.

The 1980s marked the beginning of high stakes accountability systems in American public schools. The publication *A Nation at Risk* was highly critical of American education, and called for standardized learning outcomes and assessments to hold schools, especially teachers, accountable for student achievement (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Subsequent federal guidelines under the No Child Left Behind policy required schools to demonstrate adequate yearly progress as measured by standardized tests that were aligned with state and local standards. The strict oversight of student achievement impacted teacher autonomy in a number of ways: more time was spent teaching standardized curriculum that does not allow for learning that cannot be measured on a standardized test, resources were limited in low performing schools that served diverse communities, and pressure was put on teachers to produce high test scores lest schools lose students to market and choice incentives, implying that teachers were not competent (Cooper, Fusarelli, & Randall, 2004).

Educators recognize that the nature of teaching requires teachers to make frequent decisions in uncertain situations and various contexts when working with students (Fullan, Rincón-Gallardo, & Hargreaves, 2015; Hoyle & John, 1995; Lortie, 2002). Furthermore, researchers described the concept of teacher autonomy as the capacity associated with shared decision making based on students’ needs and interests, teachers’ self-regulation, professional competence, and freedom from externally imposed agendas (Castle & Aichele, 1994). Teacher autonomy is often cited as being a component of teacher job satisfaction, and an important aspect

of teacher professionalism. While the construct of teacher autonomy is perceived as freedom from control by some teachers, autonomy may result in isolation for others (Ingersoll, 1996; Little, 1982; Lortie, 2002; Pearson & Hall, 1993).

It cannot be generalized that independent schools support higher levels of teacher decision-making because private sector schools operate outside of the constraints of governmental oversight. Bullard (1992) noted that educators in independent schools are often tasked with committee work and other teacher leadership roles, lessening the tension between authority in the classroom and feelings of powerlessness within the system, which may be experienced by teachers in highly bureaucratic organizations. Similarly, educators employed by independent schools, reported that a perk of teaching at an independent school is more teacher control over classroom, curricular, and school decisions (NAIS, 2017). Furthermore, researchers found that a critical reason why teachers are motivated to *leave* teaching is the lack of ability to exercise professional discretion over their work environment (Archbald & Porter, 1994; R. M. Ingersoll, 1996; Pearson & Hall, 1993).

Davies & Quirke (2007) recognized that elite private schools are more institutional in nature due to the relative security they enjoy as a result of long-standing histories and reputations. As mentioned in the previous sections, institutionalized educational organizations are characterized as loosely-coupled as a way to achieve and retain legitimacy (Bidwell, 2001; J. Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Weick, 1976). The result of loose-coupling is that schools are allowed to showcase formal structures for external constituents while buffering core operations, such as instruction, from external inspection (Davies & Quirke, 2007; Hanson, 2001; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The outcome is high-degrees of teacher autonomy in largely isolated classrooms.

As described above, autonomy is often isolating for teachers, resulting in balkanized work environments where faculty members rarely collaborate, however the degree to which teachers have autonomy over their work can be described using various models. For example, *work autonomy* is described as maintaining control over activities and theoretical knowledge (Parker, 2015). *Professional autonomy* focuses on the collective influence and authority of individuals, ideas, and ideals that are accepted or rejected within the context of our own beliefs (Stengel, 2010). Parker (2015) described *engaged autonomy* as a model in which “teachers are encouraged to be innovative and develop independently whilst a sense of collaboration is maintained and shared expertise is valued” (p.22). Hoyle and John (1995) depicted *responsible autonomy* as maintaining workplace independence while observing norms, expectations, and controls imposed by school leadership.

Parker’s (2015) continuum of autonomy concluded with models of increasing bureaucratic control where teacher’s autonomy is relatively constrained. Both *regulated autonomy* and *occupational autonomy* represent conditions in which teachers may determine their own paths, “but the destination is set in stone” (Parker, 2015, p.22). Prescriptive curriculums with determined student learning outcomes and culminate in the administration of standardized tests are common circumstances that result in regulated autonomy for American public-school teachers.

Summary

This section of the literature review provided a description of independent schools, their organization, hiring practices, and the reasons for why parents may choose private education. This section also introduced the varying degrees to which teachers may exercise autonomy over their work with students.

Independent schools are educational organizations that are self-governed, self-funded, and are able to choose and develop curriculum independent of state and local regulations and standards. Most independent schools are also small in size and may offer specialized programming like religious or single-sex education. Private schools often promote decentralized, site-based decision making and are governed by a board of trustees who are responsible for determining policy and setting school priorities based on the mission and values supported by the school community.

It is perceived that private schools, because they are self-selecting, may provide better educational opportunities and higher student achievement than their public school counterparts. Perceptions that independent schools are more desirable contribute to the “private school effect” which includes factors like socio-economic status, parent involvement, peer effects, and school reputation.

Teacher autonomy is described as the flexibility for teachers to make decisions about their work with students. The freedom to determine curriculum and curricular materials is often cited as a key element of teacher job satisfaction, and one that independent school teachers in particular cite as a perk of teaching in the private sector. Conversely, teacher autonomy can also lead to isolation or balkanization if teachers are creating their own programming, thus limiting opportunities for collaboration and shared work.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework provided structure and framing for the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The review of literature, as well as the experience of the researcher, informed the development of the conceptual framework for this study. The alignment and curriculum development at an independent school hypothesizes various drivers for site-based decision-

making including school values and educational research (Figure 1). The research questions for this study sought to determine the roles of school leaders in curricular initiatives, as well as the drivers for curricular decisions. Additionally, the researcher sought to understand teacher perceptions of the curricular change process and how the tensions between creative autonomy and curricular alignment were addressed.

The base of the framework includes foundational concepts that serve to ground and inform curricular development and decision making. School and community values and beliefs about teaching and learning were partnered with educational research to support curricular initiatives. Furthermore, coherent learning outcomes led to aligned curriculum plans and articulated course content. The conceptual framework included ongoing evaluation at each stage to ensure that stakeholders were consistently involved in the assessment of curricular initiatives.

Visual Representation

The conceptual framework that supported this study is provided below in graphic form.

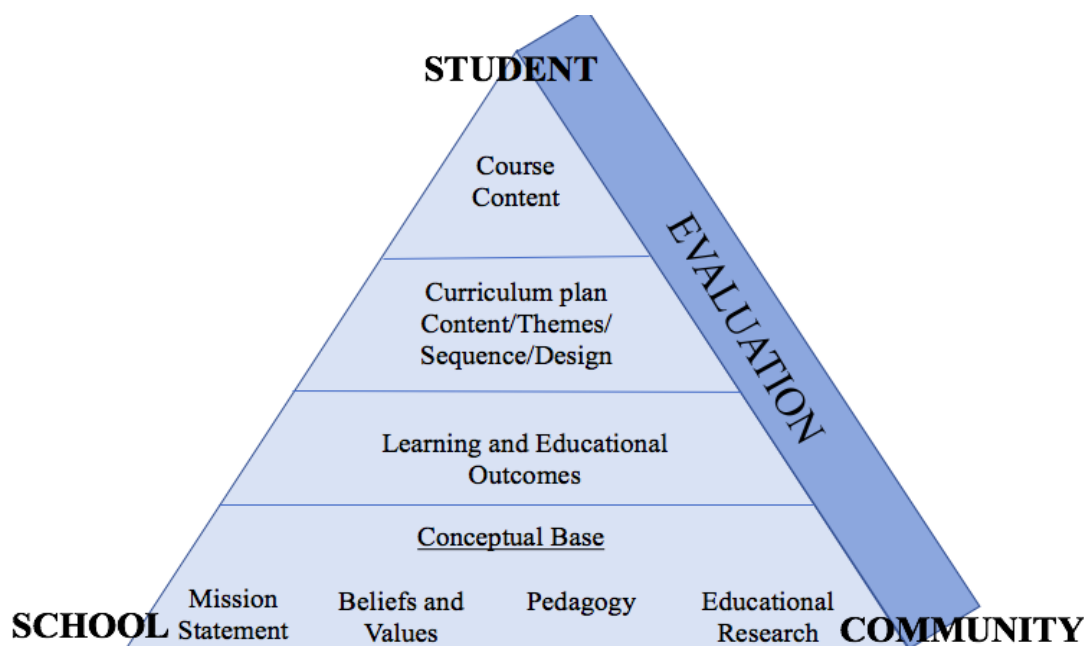


Figure 1: Conceptual framework for curriculum development at an independent school

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore the process of curricular alignment at a large independent school in Hawai'i. It is hoped that this study will provide school administrators with an understanding of teacher perceptions of organizational change, so they may address the tensions between teacher autonomy and curricular alignment. Similarly, this research may provide school administrators with an awareness of institutional theory and loosely coupled organizations. It is also hoped that this research will be of interest to educators experiencing change at their respective institutions, so they may gain insight on the benefits of teacher collaboration and student experiences.

To carry out the purpose of this study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What is leadership's role in curricular change?
2. How are curricular decisions made at a large independent school?
3. How are the tensions between creative autonomy and curricular alignment addressed?
4. What are teacher perceptions of the curricular change process?
5. Who or what is driving the shift from curricular autonomy to curricular alignment?

This chapter presents the methodology that was used to explore the above questions, including a) the rationale for using a qualitative research approach; b) philosophical foundations; c) researcher positionality; d) information regarding the research site and sample; e) methods of

data collection; f) methods of data analysis g) limitations and validity and h) ethical considerations.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

In an effort to construct knowledge and understand the process of curriculum development at a large independent school with a high level of teacher autonomy, a case study was conducted. Qualitative case study research allows phenomena to be investigated within its natural context or setting. Furthermore, Merriam and Tisdell (2015) suggested that case study is best employed when one particular unit of analysis can be identified. By studying the practices and perceptions of a large independent school's faculty and administrators' shift from a primarily teacher-determined curriculum to an aligned curriculum, the researcher attempted to address the research questions within a bounded system; the Lower School at Pacific View Academy. A bounded system is a "unit around which there are boundaries". The boundaries in this case study include one school setting, a defined time period for conducting research, and a finite number of people involved in the curriculum development project.

Using the criteria cited by Creswell (2013) and Merriam and Tisdell (2015), case study is an appropriate methodology for this research. Merriam (2009) expressed further that qualitative research is of particular relevance to educational research as its focus on discovery, insight, and understanding comes from the experience of the participants themselves and allows for the greatest impact in their lives. To address the research questions, the shift to an aligned curriculum was studied within the natural environment of the Lower School. Teachers and administrators were interviewed and observed within the school setting, and the situations and participant behavior were not be subject to manipulation.

As described in the next sections, the research site was very complex and therefore it was difficult to separate the phenomenon from the context (Baxter & Jack, 2008). As a teacher with nineteen years of experience, the researcher acknowledged that educational settings are multifaceted and include actors with distinct roles and beliefs. The Pacific View Academy is an exceptionally intricate school due to its size, history, and school culture. Hence, case study methodology for this research helped to capture the essential context of the school and its teachers.

Stake (1995) made the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental case studies based on how the research is conceived and how the findings will be used. He posited that when developed by a researcher with a genuine interest in gaining knowledge about a specific topic or phenomenon, an intrinsic case study is the “case is of the highest importance” (Stake, 1995, p.16). On the other hand, Stake stated, “[F]or instrumental case study, issue is dominant; we start and end with issues dominant” (Stake, 1995, p. 16). The topic of this research is of intrinsic interest to the researcher as an educator and novice school administrator. Currently, a teacher of Humanities, the researcher routinely reflects on classroom instruction and tries to identify lessons that reflect knowledge that is valued at both school and societal levels. Since joining the faculty three years ago, however, it has become increasingly clear to the researcher that the curricular expectations and objectives in Humanities and the other disciplines are not always explicit. Likewise, as a teacher-leader in the Lower School and doctoral student in educational administration at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, the researcher is interested in gaining an understanding of organizational change and what role an administrator plays in supporting faculty members during a philosophical and curricular shift.

Approaching this case study as instrumental creates opportunities for the research to impact various stakeholders of the Pacific View Academy community. Specifically, the study may provide opportunities for reflection and discussion about how to meet the goals set forth by the school to create curricular coherence in the Lower School.

Baxter and Jack (2008) advised that using case study methodology allows researchers opportunities not only to collect data within the context of the study, but gives researchers flexibility to use various lenses when approaching data collection and data analysis. Because case study methodology involves collaboration between the subjects and researcher, the researcher employed several lenses to develop a deeper understanding of the educational program in the Lower School.

Philosophical Foundation

Using epistemological assumption, the researcher's intent in this study was to present individual views of stakeholders within the context of Pacific View Academy in order to understand their experiences with the curriculum development and alignment process at a large independent school (Creswell, 2013). By approaching the research in this way, the participants' realities in this context were centered, minimizing the researcher's values and perspectives into the research narrative. As Stake (1995) suggested, a social constructivist paradigm, which considers multiple realities with the researcher and subjects co-constructing meaning, appears to best represent the research inquiry. Balanced representation of views and interactive links between the researcher and subjects are also characteristics of the paradigm. Within the context of education and researching human nature, the idea that there is just one reality, and that data collection can be completely objective, is imprudent and illogical.

Leading case study methodologists agree that approaching case study from a constructivist paradigm provides “a close collaboration between the researcher and the participant, while enabling participants to tell their stories” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 545). Yin (2013) and Stake (1995), developed approaches to case study that ensure research topics are well conceived and thoroughly explored. Baxter and Jack (2008) suggested that both Yin and Stake approached case study from a constructivist philosophical framework; however, Yazan (2015) contended that Yin leaned towards a positivist paradigm while Stake was firmly grounded in constructivism. Yazan (2015) wrote that Yin’s preoccupation with adhering to quality control measures and strict protocol when conducting case study research aligned with a positivistic orientation. In contrast, Yazan (2015) suggested that Stake promoted a construction of knowledge and advised case study researchers to consider alternate perspectives as reality, thus supporting a more naturalistic or constructivist paradigm.

Those who employ constructivist theory believe that knowledge is created, and new understandings are developed, based on what an individual already knows. Previous experiences and social interactions create a subjective reality. Subjects in this case study draw on their own training, experiences, and perceptions of what knowledge is of most worth. Using a constructivist lens, the researcher understands that there is not one “right way” to develop curriculum, yet through the data collection process, the researcher can build a shared understanding with colleagues about beliefs at Pacific View Academy.

Researcher Positionality

The researcher’s theoretical framework for conducting qualitative research leans towards the framework proposed by Stake (1995). Although the researcher acknowledges positivistic leanings, it is understood that perspectives are shaped by personal experiences and

interpretations of reality. A constructivist stance concludes that knowledge is socially constructed and that “multiple realities are constructed through our lived experiences and interactions with others” (Creswell, 2013, p.36). As a qualitative researcher, the researcher believes that it is important to honor subjects’ experience and knowledge to co-construct a shared reality. Employing a constructivist paradigm will allow the researcher to understand the participants’ perceptions and understandings about the research topic.

In order to acknowledge assumptions and potential biases, it was necessary for the researcher to examine her positionality as a researcher and educator. Prior to teaching in Hawai‘i, family and career choices offered the researcher a variety of professional experiences around the United States. In her eighteenth year as a classroom teacher, the researcher has taught in nine different schools in five states. She has experience in both public and independent schools. At the time this study was conducted, the researcher was in her fourth year as a teacher and faculty leader at Pacific View Academy (Figure 3).

Most of faculty members that work at Pacific View Academy have been employed at the school for many years. While professional development opportunities are regularly offered, they are not mandated. Because Pacific View Academy is independent, the predominant school culture is one of complete teacher autonomy, and faculty evaluation is sporadic. The perception is that both veteran and new teachers in the Lower School at Pacific View Academy operate within a vacuum, and rarely collaborate with respect to curriculum and professional practice.

This information is included in the positionality statement is because it is the researcher’s perception that while this model may be the norm for teachers, it is not in the best interest of the students that attend the school. Recent research studies suggest that teacher collaboration and collective practices lead to improved student achievement (Moolenaar, 2012; Ronfeldt, 2015).

Not only is it believed that teacher collaboration increases the potential for student success, but the researcher also perceives that working in a collaborative environment leads to improved faculty morale and professional growth (Sterrett & Irizarry, 2015). It is believed that the researcher's experiences at other schools have helped her to develop a broader sense of how faculties work together and what systems work well to promote student achievement.

Given the researcher's tenure at Pacific View Academy, she cannot truly be considered an outsider because she will be relying on colleagues to allow access to the curriculum committee meetings and to commit time to interviews. Similarly, her training as an elementary education generalist is similar to that of the researcher's colleagues' own preparation. Her

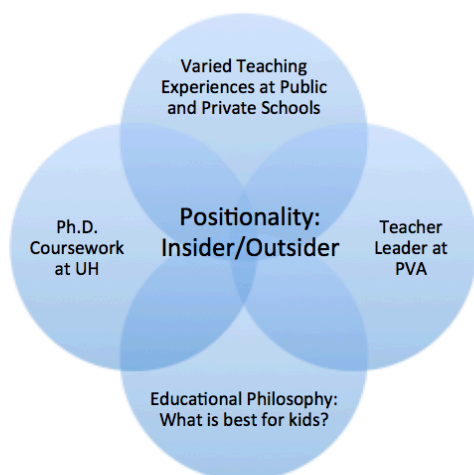


Figure 2. Researcher Positionality

position, however, may be unique in that the researcher does have extensive *recent* experience at schools that are distinctly different from Pacific View Academy. The researcher's status as a Ph.D. student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is singular and may be positively or negatively perceived (Figure 2).

Approaching this study from a potential critical perspective, the researcher has struggled with the prevailing culture of limited collaboration and perceived complete autonomy at Pacific View Academy. The researcher's grade-level Humanities colleagues only met four times to discuss curriculum in the past three years. Three of those meetings were mandated. During parent-teacher conferences, many parents wonder aloud why their children have a different math curriculum each year. Given prior

experiences at other schools, this was confusing to the researcher as well, and she was concerned that the school was not providing students, one of them being her daughter, with equitable educational experiences.

Therefore, while the initial intent for this study was to approach curricular alignment from a deficit model, the researcher recognized her own biases and assumptions and intended to develop themes and analysis based on the data collected. Using the school's own curricular initiatives as the unit of inquiry, the research was focused on curricular development and alignment in a large independent school and how the shift from teacher autonomy to an aligned model was being addressed at Pacific View Academy.

Overview of Research Design

Table 1 presents the steps that needed to be carried out for this case study, including identifying the topic, reviewing the literature, developing and carrying out the data collection methods, and conducting the data analysis.

Steps to Carry out the Case Study

Step 1: Identification of a Topic for Research	The WASC report for Pacific Vie Academy identified the tension between teacher autonomy and curricular alignment as an area of opportunity for the school.
Step 2: Literature Review	A review of the literature regarding organizational change theory, schools as organizations, institutional theory, teacher autonomy and teacher collaboration was conducted to understand the body of knowledge that exists in these areas. This review of literature was ongoing throughout the dissertation process.
Step 3: Creation and testing of Interview Protocol	An initial protocol was created, tested, and refined for faculty and administrative subjects.
Step 4: Proposal/Prospectus Meeting	The Committee convened to review the prospectus for this study and to develop questions for the Comprehensive Exams. (Fall 2017)
Step 5: Comprehensive Defense	The Committee convened to review the researcher's Comprehensive Exams and provide feedback for revisions to proposal. (Spring 2018)
Step 6: IRB Approval	All documentation was submitted to the IRB, which ensured ethical considerations and protocols were understood and followed.

Step 7: Invitations to Participate in Study	The researcher sought and contacted participants as described in the Methodology chapter. a) An electronic letter was sent describing the purpose of the research, an invitation to participate in the study, and participation details b) Informed Consent Forms were reviewed and signed
Step 8: Document Review	Archived and current curricular documents that were available were reviewed by the researcher
Step 9: Interviews and Committee Observations	Semi-structured interviews comprised of open-ended questions were conducted with 27 participants. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Curricular committee meetings were attended with the researcher as a participant-observer. Field notes were taken by hand.
Step 10: Data coding	The researcher coded the interview transcripts by hand and using Dedoose (CAQDAS).
Step 11: Data Analysis	The data collected from the study were analyzed individually and collectively to develop themes and analytic categories.

Table 1: Steps to Carry out the Case Study

Research Site and Participants

Research Site

The primary research site for this case study was a large independent school located in Hawai'i. The selection of this site was purposeful because the faculty members were easily accessible and the researcher was a faculty member in the Lower School. Moreover, the school strives to develop faculty researchers to support both the mission of the school and the ongoing regional accreditation process. To maintain confidentiality and protect research participants, the school was referred to Pacific View Academy (a pseudonym) in this dissertation. Likewise, attempts were made to guard specific identifying information about the school, especially because the location is geographically limited and easily recognized. Codes and pseudonyms were used for all subjects.

Enrollment at Pacific View Academy is nearly four thousand students from kindergarten through twelfth grade, and the school employs about three hundred and fifty faculty members. Due to the size of the campus and student body, the school administration is separated into two

divisions. The Upper School includes students in grades nine through twelve, and the Lower School incorporates grades Kindergarten through eight. A principal, two assistant principals, and several administrative or class deans supervise each division.

Participants

The target population for this research project was all Lower School faculty members and administrators. Participants for this study were purposefully sampled for interviews and curriculum committee meeting observations. Kindergarten through eighth grade teachers, class deans, the Dean of Curriculum, and the Lower School principal were potential study participants ($n = 30$).

Subjects were invited via email to participate in semi-structured interviews (Appendix A). Participants for interviews were selected using purposive sampling methods considering faculty demographics and professional diversity. All participants signed two identical Informed Consent forms (Appendix B). Participants kept one form, and the researcher kept the second form for her files. This document outlined that participation in this study was completely voluntary, the data would be used for research purposes only, and their identities would be kept confidential. Research for the case study followed IRB protocols. All participants received a small token of gratitude in the form of a Starbucks gift card for five dollars, which they were able to keep even if they withdrew their consent at a later date.

All participants were full time employees of Pacific View Academy. The classroom faculty participants were the lead teachers in their classrooms, support faculty, or members of curriculum committees. Some of the participants in the study were also parents of current students or had children that are graduates of the school. Administrators that were not classroom

instructors participated in semi-structured interviews and were observed during curriculum committee meetings.

Data Collection Methods

Data for this qualitative collective case study were collected in multiple ways including participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and reviews of documents and artifacts (e.g. archived curriculum materials) (Figure 2). As Creswell (2013) advised, the triangulation of data helps to determine themes focused on the attitudes and interpretations for how curriculum development at Pacific View Academy is conceptualized and approached. Triangulation is further discussed with data analysis.

Data collection began with the review of archived and current curriculum documents and materials. Semi-structured interviews and participant observations with Pacific View Academy administrators and faculty took place beginning in the spring of 2018. Interviews were scheduled with individual teachers by email and conducted on the Pacific View Academy campus at mutually agreed upon times. Each meeting with participants was scheduled to last approximately forty-five minutes to one hour. Observations were recorded using jottings and field notes. All interviews were audio recorded electronically with permission from the subjects.

Document and artifact reviews were conducted with permission from the Pacific View Academy archives. When permissible, photographs were taken of archived curriculum materials. Recently developed curriculum materials were reviewed electronically.

Data Analysis

Data analysis took place in iterative stages based on work by Miles and Huberman (1994) (Figure 3). Yin (2013) advised that case study researchers often need to become adept at conducting analysis while collecting data.

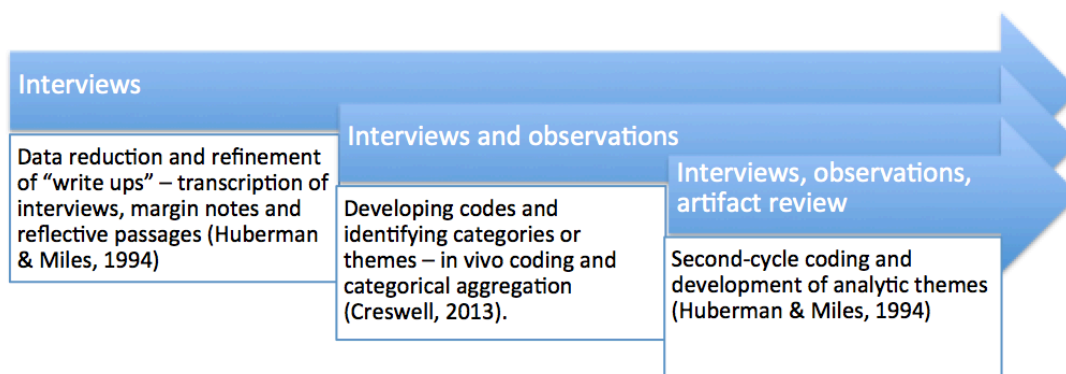


Figure 3. Data Analysis

The first stage of analysis was transcription or "write ups" of raw participant interviews and observations. Field notes that are incomplete or subject to bias will be noted (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 51). Additionally, the data was organized into digital files in preparation for coding. Margin notes, analytic memos, and narrative reflections were written throughout immersive readings of the transcripts. Concurrently, in vivo codes were developed, refined, and changed during this stage in order to reduce data so that further analysis could be undertaken without data overload (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The second stage of analysis involved further examination of codes to develop categories and themes within the data. While Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested that counting codes may be helpful to develop a sense of frequency for how often certain information may appear in the data, Creswell (2013) cautioned that data may be overlooked because not all codes carry equal weight, or may represent contradictory views. Themes in the data were identified using categorical aggregation to link coded data that expressed similar ideas (Creswell, 2013). The researcher employed computer-assisted qualitative data software to assist with data analysis.

Collecting data from faculty interviews, curriculum committee observations, and artifact reviews provided opportunities for triangulation. Comparing these sources of information

allowed the researcher to check the accuracy of her interpretations (Creswell, 2013).

Furthermore, having three types of data helped to develop a deeper understanding of the curriculum development and alignment process at Pacific View Academy.

The final stages of analysis included interpreting relationships between the salient categories to draw conclusions. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested arranging data in matrices before stating research findings in order to deepen understanding for the research questions. Creswell (2013) proposes that data analysis is a spiral and the final bend is developing narrative and visual representations for information gathered during the research process to “present an in-depth picture of the case (or cases)” (p. 191).

Limitations and Validity

Limitations

Embarking on a study of this magnitude yielded some significant limitations specific to this study. Foremost was the support from the Pacific View Academy administration to use the school as the primary case study site. This limitation was addressed, and permission was granted from the Office of Professional Programs at Pacific View Academy to proceed with my research. In addition, the researcher was released from teaching responsibilities for the 2017-2018 school year to conduct research that yielded insights into the school’s development of a “guaranteed and viable” Lower School curriculum (Marzano, 2003). The Lower School principal granted permission to collect data for the researcher’s dissertation research for the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

As to be expected with most research projects, time was a limitation was considered. The expectation was that the study would take twelve months to complete. The actual time that the study took to complete was twenty-three months. The review of literature, development of

proposal, comprehensive exams and interviews took place during the 2017-2018 school year. Transcriptions of interviews, analysis, and revisions to the dissertation were completed during the summer of 2018 and the 2018-2019 school year.

A final limitation was recruiting subjects for the study. Two factors considered were time and willingness to participate. The Lower School teachers at Pacific View Academy carry heavy teaching loads and it was expected that some may not want to spend preparation time or personal time being interviewed. The researcher was confident that she had enough contacts at the school would find a core of teachers who would agree to participate. Because this study coincided with the Lower School curriculum initiative, opportunities to engage with faculty members were available through the course of the work already being done on campus.

Another consideration recruiting subjects for the study was assuring colleagues that the researcher was not observing their participation in curriculum development in an evaluative capacity. It was necessary to consider teachers' readiness to welcome a researcher into their professional practice. The researcher was a participant observer, which may have reassured faculty members that the intention was only to document the curriculum development process

Validity

Fraenkel et al. (2012) outlined eight procedures for developing qualitative research studies that are valid and reliable (p. 458). Similarly, Creswell and Miller (2000) offered similar strategies to establish validity in qualitative research. Using these points as a guide, the researcher addressed this approach to ensure that data and analysis retained credibility.

Fraenkel et al. (2012) suggested that using a semi-structured interview protocol for qualitative research is restrictive and formal. Additionally, the researchers advised that semi-structured interviews are "often best conducted towards the end of the study, as they tend to

shape responses to the researcher's perceptions of how things are" (Fraenkel et al., 2012, p. 451). This is something that the researcher took into consideration as she began interviews with her colleagues, however due to the timing of curricular meetings, interviews and observations were concurrent.

Ethical Considerations

Considering that this research was being conducted at the school where the researcher is currently and will continue to be employed, permission has been granted to conduct research on campus. Institutional Research Board consent from adult subjects participating in the study was obtained for all participants. No children participated in the study.

Summary of Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher provided descriptions of the methodology she used to conduct her study. The study consisted of document reviews, observations, and semi-structured interviews. Interview data was transcribed, coded, and analyzed. Data was collected according to IRB protocols.

Chapter IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this case study was to understand the curriculum development process at a large independent school through an exploration of the ways in which educational leaders negotiate the tensions between creative autonomy and curricular coherence. Specifically, this study examined how leadership planned and facilitated the development of a “guaranteed and viable” curriculum (Marzano, 2003) and teacher perceptions of the process. The development of a coherent curriculum was a significant change initiative for the case study site.

This chapter presents key findings drawn from twenty-seven qualitative interviews. Chapter four contains demographic information and profiles of the participants involved in the study. Also included in this chapter are illustrative supporting comments that reinforce the emergent themes and research findings.

In conducting this study, qualitative methodology was used. The research objective was to understand how school leadership initiated and implemented a curricular change in the Lower School (K-8) division. The research questions explored were:

1. What is leadership’s role in curricular change?
2. How are curricular decisions made at a large independent school?
3. How are the tensions between creative autonomy and curricular alignment addressed?
4. What are teacher perceptions of the curricular change process?

5. Who or what is driving the shift from curricular autonomy to curricular alignment?

Participant demographics

The participants of this study included twenty-seven full-time Lower School faculty members from Pacific View Academy. They ranged in age from 33 to 63 years old; eight were male and nineteen were female. Eighteen participants were classroom teachers, five were support teachers or specialists, and four were members of the Lower School administrative team. On average, participants had twenty years of experience in education. Ten participants in the study are parents of current students at the school. Seven participants in the study are parents of students that graduated from the school. Participants represented a wide range of teaching experience at Pacific View Academy (Table 2).

Years in Education					
	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21+ years
Number of Subjects	0	1	3	5	18

Years Teaching at Pacific View Academy					
	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21+ years
Number of Subjects	8	2	6	5	6

Division/Position					
	K-2	3-5	6-8	Specialists	Admin.
Number of Subjects	6	4	8	5	4

Table 2: Participant demographics

For reporting purposes and to protect participants' identities, each participant was assigned a unique code. Classroom teachers were coded as T and assigned a number. For example, the first teacher was coded as T1. Specialists were coded using an S with a number and

school administrators were assigned an A with a unique number. Specialists and administrators that worked with multiple grade levels were only assigned a single designation and were not coded twice.

At the time of the study, the school had initiated a curriculum mapping inventory with the goal of developing curriculum that was horizontally and vertically aligned for grades K through 8. Teachers had been asked to record their classroom curriculums and assessment activities on a chart that was developed by the Lower School administration (Figure 4). Teachers were instructed to map out what they actually teach in their classrooms between August and May. Groups of teachers at the same grade level were then given opportunities to examine the documents from their grade level in effort to determine what elements of the curriculum they were all teaching, and where their teaching diverged. Similarly, teachers from adjacent grade levels attended meetings to discuss vertical curriculum articulation.

Participants contributed perceptions of the curriculum alignment process and views about teacher autonomy at Pacific View Academy through semi-structured interviews. Each interview lasted between forty and seventy minutes. Interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed into printed text.

Lower School Curriculum Planning Worksheet

2017-2018 School Year

Robert Marzano (2003) notes that curriculum should be both guaranteed and viable. Such a curriculum consists of clear standards and indicators that outline the content, concepts, and skills that are essential within an academic discipline and at each grade level. Individual teachers do not have the option to not teach this content and these skills, or to replace them with something else. Viability means the distinctly articulated content and skills can be taught and learned (not rushed and covered) within the time frames available during the school year.

When the curriculum is not viable:	When the curriculum is not guaranteed:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year after year, teachers report there is not enough time to complete the intended curriculum. Students consistently do not reach the expected standard for particular learning goals. The same topics are taught in multiple years. Particular subject areas consistently ask for a different timetable (e.g., longer blocks, or shorter blocks more frequently). Teachers complain of "curriculum overload." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The data from common assessments is persistently inconsistent. Particular groups (or classes) do not achieve to the level of those in other classes working on the same curriculum. Parents consistently complain that their child is not doing the same kind of work as kids in other classes of the same grade. Teachers feel free to substitute the school's curriculum with topics they are more familiar with. Teachers consistently use different criteria to assess the same type of task. There is a culture of "permission" that supports and promotes individual teachers making many of the decisions about what students will learn.

Our goal is to have a Lower School curriculum that is **guaranteed, viable, and articulates** what students need to know and be able to do. At PVA, the guaranteed and viable curriculum is a combination of important learning targets based on core standards and 21st Century Skills. It specifies what learning is expected by the end of each school year, and is embedded in the Goals of a PVA Education.

To that end, **your summer assignment is to map out your curriculum for the upcoming year.**

We'd like for each teacher to individually fill out the table on the other side with the topics/content/skills that you cover at any given point during the upcoming 2017-2018 school year, in the various disciplines listed. This ensures that:

- Teachers, students, and parents across all grades and subject areas will have a guide for what students need to learn in order to be successful.
- K-8 instructional programming will create necessary scaffolding for learning, align the focus of critical standards, and reduce redundancies in instruction.
- Overlapping critical skills will prevent gaps in the necessary sequence of learning across grade levels and subject areas.

In addition, we ask that you also identify which of the Goals of a PVA Education your instructional units target (if any):

Goals of a PVA Education	Goals Distilled	Goals Embodied
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop the full potential of each student through a broad and vigorous program of studies characterized by high expectations; and through rich opportunities and experiences for exploration, growth, and mastery. To develop within each PVA student the capacity for critical and creative thought, and skills for effective written and oral communication, inter-personal collaboration, quantitative reasoning, scientific inquiry, and a global perspective. To develop qualities of curiosity, resourcefulness, persistence, and resilience – ultimately becoming a confident, self-directed, lifelong learner. To help each PVA student to see the inter-connections between their subjects, to integrate Hawaiian values and culture in ways that can extend and deepen their learning, to be able to think flexibly, to have a questioning attitude, to generate alternatives and possibilities, and to apply and adapt their learning to relevant issues and challenges. To foster within each PVA student, personal and social responsibility by developing empathy and compassion, and by embracing diversity at all levels, while cultivating moral reasoning that leads to moral action, personal leadership, and engaged citizenship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hawaiian values & culture Social responsibility Civic engagement Collaboration Critical and creative thinking Curiosity Embracing diversity at all levels Empathy Persistence and resilience Resourcefulness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical, flexible, and global thinkers Global collaborators and communicators Quantitative and scientific reasoners Thoughtful questioners Confident, adaptive, and self-directed learners Iterative, experimental, persistent problem solvers Compassionate, respectful, moral actors

Please list what you *actually* do, not what you think you *should* be doing. And, unless classes work in tandem, this should be done individually, and not in collaboration with others. We want to see what you do as a starting point.

Coding

To reveal findings from the interview data, coding was used to reveal major themes. First-cycle coding of the interview data was conducted using descriptive and in-vivo coding techniques to preserve participant voice. The interviews were transcribed, printed, and coded by hand multiple times to reveal major themes. Bracketing the ideas allowed themes to present themselves with the least amount of bias from the researcher. As previously described, participant identities were preserved by assigning letter and number codes that corresponded only to each subject's employment category (teacher, specialist, administrator) in the Lower School.

Second-cycle coding employed computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) to organize illustrative supportive excerpts and analytic memos from the original data. Digital copies of the interview transcripts were loaded into the Dedoose database and recoded to reveal dichotomous relationships between the emergent themes. Similarly, using the CAQDAS allowed for frequency analysis and multiple coding for relevant excerpts. As conceived, the original premise of this research was to explore the tension between teacher autonomy and coherence in the context of curricular alignment. Versus coding allowed for other opposing themes to emerge from the data for analysis.

Findings

Five major findings were uncovered through the data collection. The dichotomous themes relate directly the original research question concerning the tension between autonomy and curricular alignment.

1. Common Instructional Vision v. Disconnected Philosophies
2. Competing Initiatives v. Focused Development

3. Accountability v. Logic of Confidence
4. Collaboration v. Balkanization
5. Instructional Leadership v. Independent Management

Below is a detailed discussion of the five findings, with details that offer support and explanation for each finding.

Finding #1

Participants described personal educational philosophies and acknowledged that at the time of the study there was not a universally agreed upon instructional vision for the PVA Lower School. The lack of a common vision created opportunities for teachers to cultivate significant autonomy with respect to instructional practices and to develop curriculum based on their personal experiences, strengths and philosophies.

Common Instructional Vision v. Disconnected Philosophies

The absence of a commonly accepted curriculum at Pacific View Academy is compatible with the perception that there is also a lack of understanding for the foundational educational philosophy at the school. Many participants cited the school's ability to provide a diverse array of experiences for children. There was an overwhelming sentiment that students were able to "find their passions" at the school, particularly in the middle grades as more programming choices became available for students. Coupled with this idea is that the Lower School does a good job of attending to the "whole child" through rich and varied experiences. It was acknowledged that not every child takes the same path, and that depending on which teacher a child is placed with, students at the same grade level may have different educational experiences and be taught different curriculums. Alternately, some participants described that the school's many offerings created a situation where programming was diluted and lacked clarity and depth.

“I think that's a tricky question. I try to stick to what I see in the mission and the vision. But I do feel like the school struggles to hold their identity and to hire people and say, ‘This is what we believe. This is how we operate. This is what we do,’ and hold people to a certain philosophy. I always tell people, ‘If you go to teach at Montessori school, you are going to teach Montessori. You’re not going to go in and say, ‘By the way, I do something different.’” I feel like PVA is always struggling to figure out exactly who they are and then live by that.” (T8)

“I don’t know. I mean, I think the assumption is that the kids come in reading and writing and doing math. I don’t know what our philosophy is. I would love to know. I think if it was about rigor, that’s false.” (S1)

“I’d say PVA tries to be all things to all people. There are amazing opportunities. But there’s not a consistent philosophy other than just try to be good at everything and do everything. In my opinion, we don’t have a clear philosophy. I do think we do a great job of appreciating the whole child approach. I don’t think we always do it perfectly, but whatever a kid wants to pursue or be good at, we’re going to support that. But I don’t think we have a clear philosophy as a school.” (T13)

“I think at PVA the philosophy is tradition. I think it is Hawaiian connection and Hawaiian history. One of the top reasons why I sent my children here and not to another school was because of this sense of knowing your place, knowing who you are in this Hawaiian environment and this long-standing tradition which is uber important to me. I graduated from this school and my father worked here for a long time.” (T2)

“Philosophically, we're all over the place and have been for a very long time. We have no instructional vision, although we're trying, but we don't have one. I think instructional vision and the mission are often at odds with one another.” (A4)

The literature on teaching and school organization suggests that teacher autonomy is present at varying degrees in every school. While some teachers may be subjected to prescribed curriculum that requires them to use a pacing guides to be lock-step with their colleagues, there is still opportunity for teachers to bring their own personality and expertise to the curriculum. This is arguably the nature of teaching where teachers are invariably housed in individual classrooms where doors are closed.

Having a unifying philosophy or instructional vision is a way to help teachers understand what the school believes is best for its students. It also allows for faculty to make sense of alignment initiatives and provides a rationale for why teachers are to follow similar paths in

terms of classroom curriculum. Common understandings, learning outcomes, professional development, and language may also support collaboration within the curriculum so that students at each grade level are taught a guaranteed curriculum. The absence of foundational understandings and common learning outcomes supports increased teacher autonomy at PVA because each teacher is trying to make her own meaning for her students and herself. Teachers reported that when they began at PVA, they were not given curricular documents for their subject or grade-level, and therefore either researched other sources for curricular guidance or fell back on what they had done previously at other schools.

“We don’t have it, period. I’m coming from Common Core where there are strict learning goals. It was too much, but now there’s nothing. In a way, it’s freeing because you can pretty much do whatever you want. That’s how I feel at least. I could cut out this entire unit, and so what? Even on a test, I’m like, ‘Well, do I need to include this question? What’s the learning goal?’ The answer is always, ‘I don’t know.’ There aren’t any learning goals.” (T15)

“My understanding in the Lower School is you come in the way I did; maybe you’ve taught somewhere else and had a curriculum that you’ve been using. But you come in expecting it to be like, ‘Here’s how we teach [subject] at PVA. Here’s what you’re expected to do.’ No. You come in and everyone is like, ‘Good luck. Have a good year. Go in your bubble. See you in May.’”(T13)

“I had to start from ground zero, like figuring out what are the expectations for my grade-level. What am I supposed to be doing? What is the end goal? Because there’s nothing stating what that is.” (T2)

“It was overwhelming to not have a curriculum that you were to follow. Most other schools had a general curriculum that everyone was referring to. For me to come in and hear, ‘You can teach [subject] however want, and you can use whatever you want, was overwhelming to me. Even as a veteran teacher I’ve developed my own little tricks, but not knowing what anybody else was doing was overwhelming and didn’t provide any opportunities for collaboration.” (T10)

“So, the biggest thing I really did, and still do in my second year here, is rely on Common Core. I don’t know what my colleagues do in terms of teaching expectations.” (T11)

“When I first started, I asked teachers, ‘What is the curriculum you’re using’. I meant Harcourt or Houghton Mifflin. I asked about scope and sequence or standards. It

was amazing because I found at PVA people told me, ‘We can do whatever we want.’ It sounds wonderful until there are six or eight classes at each grade level, with each teaching different curriculum. Within each room everything is super specific to that teacher. It’s fascinating, and as an educator working with children from multiple grade levels, nearly impossible for me. I can’t do my job because there’s no curriculum and because there’s no scope and sequence.” (S1)

There are indicators that the middle grades of the Lower School (6-8) are farther along in curriculum development than the lower grades (K-5) due to the departmental structure in the middle school. The organization of the Lower School is such that grades 6-8 are primarily taught by discipline, and therefore departmentalized, while the lower grades are primarily self-contained classrooms where teachers are responsible for instruction of multiple subjects. The departmentalization in the middle grades may account for a more structured approach to curriculum development, with teacher leaders being named as department heads who have the authority to conduct regular curricular meetings. The success of creating curricular inventories or maps in the middle grades has been mixed according to teachers and administrators that work within those divisions. Along these same lines, there are mixed perceptions for whether having aligned curricular goals result in shared beliefs or philosophies about teaching and learning.

“Right, I think, across the Lower School. I mean part of it has been leadership. I know I’ve been part of the leadership but there’s a level above me where we had Deans asking to do curriculum mapping. The minute the word standards came up, that was it. Many efforts over the years to push us into that direction stalled big time. It was interesting. During the last WASC evaluation, we didn’t call them curriculum maps because that was not in any favor. We called them curriculum inventories.” (A3)

“In grade six through eight, we had inventories which have been really helpful. They are imperfect and works in progress. But at least we have essential questions and enduring understandings that have more or less been agreed upon by the grade levels and by curriculum departments. I was a part of crafting the curriculum inventory for [a discipline] for six through eight.” (A1)

“I think the curriculum decisions are made by a committee. I think there are designated people. I’m not positive. I wouldn’t even be able to tell you who was on it if you had asked. I know [Teacher X]. At least I believe [Teacher X] is on something.

[Teacher Z] I think is on something too. But what I would think it's called the curriculum committee." (T9)

"They think they're doing what's best in their classroom in this scenario, but I don't think there are conversations, department-wide, that have much to do with what's best for kids because we don't have enough time. We're not talking about pedagogy and philosophy. We're talking about getting tasks done. That may just be in my department. I don't know about what the other departments do. I do think Social Studies, they've done a deep dive in eighth grade to figure out what we are doing and why. 'Let's start from the beginning. Let's start with what's good for kids.' My department, not so much." (T13)

"And so, another thing that the Dean of Curriculum is trying to bring back is what's called the curriculum committee. They have one in the high school. It is department chairs. I think he's also thinking that in the elementary, K-5, hopefully there's going to be people who are representing the departments down there as well so that they're part of that Lower School curriculum committee as well." (T14)

"For K through five, when hiring around that, it's making clear though that our curriculum is a work in progress and can give examples of how we're making steps there. Teacher's College is one example. What we're doing in mathematics is another example. We're not there yet for sure, but at least, we're putting some stakes in the ground that we can navigate towards. That's the way that we describe it." (A1)

Faculty in the Lower School at PVA continue to grapple with a cohesive and common philosophy of teaching and learning, as well as aligned curricular goals within grade levels or departments. The absence of an accepted instructional vision leads to wide variation with respect to beliefs about how children best learn and approaches to curriculum development and delivery. Teachers describe their processes for developing curricular goals for their students in differing ways, which naturally leads to autonomy within and between classrooms and departments.

Finding #2

Participants described multiple new curricular initiatives that were introduced to faculty that created conflicts for deciding where to prioritize their time and energy. Similarly, professional development devoted to new initiatives was described as inadequate given the scope of the changes that were being asked of faculty. Teachers desired to focus their efforts on one initiative with ongoing related professional development.

Competing Initiatives v. Focused Development

Pacific View Academy is a diverse and large institution. The Lower School employs 180 faculty members from kindergarten to eighth grade. Teachers have varying degrees of expertise and many take advantage of the school's robust professional development offerings, which include on-campus trainings and off-campus grants for workshops and travel. Teachers may apply for learning grants according to their professional interests and funding is approved by administrators. Faculty professional development days occur three times per school year. The agendas for the professional development days may be set by the Lower School administration or the K-12 department for Professional Learning. Some professional development offerings on the three designated days are focused on divisional initiatives, and some are devoted to school-wide learning.

Lower school faculty reported that they perceive the administration has introduced new initiatives at a pace that is difficult for faculty to implement. Teachers perceive that neither a clear rationale nor sufficient time has been devoted to discussing and learning about new programs. As a result, respondents report that there has been some initiative fatigue and some teachers are not devoting energy or time to the changes, opting instead to "wait-it-out".

"I feel this has slowed down in the last year or two, but I think that when I came on, I sensed there was almost a yearly initiative that was brought up. A lot of the teachers who had been here longer than me were already like, 'Oh, God, here we go again.' Then the second year, it was a different initiative. It was frustrating as a teacher because you spend your afternoon or your evening outside of school trying to invest in this new thing. But then the next year, it's like, 'What happened to that thing?'"(T11)

"My little perspective from this angle -- they [administration] have a bigger perspective -- I feel like we take on too many things at a time. We're not getting anything done. Let's just pick one or maybe two. I know it's hard because all these people are asking the administration to solve all these problems. But I just feel like teachers are getting really burned out and feeling there's just too much. Any one of these things is good and should be done." (T9)

“I think part of the unwillingness to change is because we have so many initiatives at the school. It goes back to we tried to be everything for every kind of child. We have so many initiatives and we don’t feel we really do anything well.” (T14)

“I think part of it is time. I think that we have so many initiatives going on at the same time. You’ve got your PLC stuff and whatever it is that you have focused in on. You’ve got that going on with that section of people. But then additionally, there are other things that you’re expected to do. Make sure you’ve got technology going on. Make sure you’ve got inquiry going on. Are you applying the Teachers College stuff and your reading workshop? How’s writers’ workshop? Then there’s tons of math discussions going on where we were piloting two math curriculum this year, Envision and Investigations because they were making curricular decisions for next year because it’s been so loosey-goosey and nothing consistent K-5.” (T4)

Similarly, many teachers reported that they were willing to devote time to learning about new initiatives that were endorsed by the administration, however faculty wished that more professional development were provided for the specific enterprise. It is perceived that in recent years, the introductions of new curricula and new teaching approaches have not been sufficiently supported with learning opportunities and implementation efforts have fallen flat or been abandoned within the course of one school year. PVA’s robust professional development program supports many individual teacher learning opportunities, and teachers often apply for funding to pursue workshops or institutes based on individual interests that are not necessarily consistent or aligned with school-wide initiatives. Focused professional development that specifically supports the Lower School curricular initiatives has been sparse and not ongoing, which contributes to the frustration teachers may feel, causing them to withdraw and develop their work autonomously.

“It’s just super discouraging, disenfranchising experience of, like, this is our new initiative and then no PD support. None of us got trained in makery projects. So now each team is like, “Project time.” We try to throw something together. We try to make it useful for the kids. But it just doesn’t end up being a good experience for anybody.” (T13)

“[Inquiry learning] lost the momentum because there was not the time nor the ability to go into other people’s classrooms and see people doing inquiry or have the models. We would send people to other schools where inquiry happened. But until you get someone connecting with you, with your curriculum, and helping you to see how you can change it or try it, or going to

their room and seeing they have changed and they have tried it, I think it's hard to get people to actually see it. We didn't have a very good PD strategy.” (A3)

Contributing to the culture of autonomy is the frustration that teachers feel trying to navigate simultaneous implementation of new initiatives at PVA. Teachers report feeling apprehensive and skeptical when new programs are proposed. The curriculum alignment initiative is not immune to this reaction and teachers report that this work has been done before, but is not regularly reviewed, nor publicly archived so that teachers can find work that has been previously completed. In many cases, the K-5 teachers reported that curricular mapping had been completed in fits-and-starts, but the work was usually stored on one person's computer and forgotten about when the next meeting was scheduled.

The lack of focused teacher development for all teachers has contributed to a culture of teacher autonomy, accounting for the desire by administrators to align curriculum, develop common student learning outcomes, and provide professional development for all teachers. Put simply, the introductions of yearly initiatives, where there was no follow-through has created significant initiative fatigue within the faculty at PVA. Teachers are cautious about putting too much effort towards new initiatives presented by the administration, because the history is that there is very little follow-through or accountability for that work.

Finding #3

Participants described very few formal accountability measures at PVA. There is currently no formal teacher evaluation system in the Lower School, and collecting standardized data is not a regular practice at any grade level. Teacher respondents described high levels of trust that they were fulfilling their duties as faculty members with minimal inspection. Participants perceived the highest levels of accountability came from parents and not school administrators or colleagues. Participants also reported that accountability came from different

places, such as accountability to self, accountability to colleagues, and accountability to the school.

Accountability v. Logic of Confidence

At the time of this study, the formal teacher evaluation program in the Lower School had been suspended. Previously, Lower School teachers had entered a five-year cycle evaluation system that included classroom observations, feedback conferences with administrators and colleagues, teaching portfolios and periods of reflection. The recent changes in administration prompted a review and subsequent suspension of the evaluation cycles for all Lower School faculty members. Although teachers were part of the evaluation system until recently, many teachers report that they rarely or never received feedback from administrators. Teachers report that administrators rarely visit classrooms to observe instruction.

“I've never really had any of my department chairs in Lower School observe me teach or give me feedback.” (T13)

“I think it's very important. We have seemed to have moved away from evaluation, as it's framed as being unkind or unproductive. We do have phenomenal teachers in the school but we also have some who aren't. We've basically done away with first year evaluations and support for teachers, and I have expressed the negative implications quite vocally.” (A3)

“It's kind of creepy a little bit because nobody has wanted to see any lesson plans, nobody has wanted to see a grade book, nobody's-- I don't think they've followed up on running records from the beginning of the year. I put it in that spreadsheet I got because I expected someone to ask for it. But as far as I know, unless I missed it, nobody's asked for that. The Dean has come in once to observe me, but other than that--”(T16)

“Showing up on time I would say is the way that I'm most consistently held accountable although I don't even -- because I pass by our dean's office, but I haven't been visited by her. I've been visited by [the Dean of Faculty] once because I'm a new teacher and I'm part of the new teacher program, so he's come and observed me. For the PLC my teammate has come to observe me, but otherwise, maybe my report cards? Maybe I'm being held accountable based on grades of students and the way I write my comments? I'm not sure.” (T15)

“Well, I think I've just been so trusted that I really have not been held accountable to things. When we've done stuff with [the Dean of Faculty] where we had to fill in our slide [template for the meeting]. That was the most accountable I felt.” (T10)

“Then when the administrators or leaders are able to stand up in front of a group and speak -- and say ‘I know you're doing such a great job’, the question that always comes to my mind is, ‘How do you know that?’ Because you've never come to my classroom to sit. ‘Well, I trust what you're doing.’ It's like yes, but there has to be a moment where you have to see what it is you're talking about to know what you're talking about. If you're standing up and talking to parents about what's going on, it can't be what you think is going on or because of what you heard from a particular teacher or whatnot. You have to see it. I think that to me that has been a negative. We have more administrators, but we don't have more observation or more connection to the teachers and what's really going on.” (S2)

“That's a great question. Honor? I know for my partner and I, it's because we sit down all the time and we have our planners in front of us and talk about what we're doing or would check-in throughout the day, ‘How'd that go? How'd this go?’ But in terms of what's going on in other classes, I'm not sure or if it's the Dean that's checking in on what's being done or not being done. Yeah, that's an interesting one. I think that's where a lot of pushback would come from to because you don't want, teachers don't want to feel like a big brother is watching them and telling them what to do.” (T3)

Similar to the lack of classroom observations, is the lack of standardized data to track student progress. Due to the high levels of teacher autonomy, assessments and grading are unique to classroom teachers. In terms of accountability, teachers report that it is difficult to track student learning across grade levels. A recent reading initiative in grades K-5 has included the implementation of a common assessment for all students. The administration has asked that reading data is collected twice a year. The data is not normed and teachers report that there is high variability depending on who is administering the assessment. Because this kind of data collection is new to PVA, it is reported that the use of data is not necessarily used to make decisions about classroom instruction yet. The use of standardized or common assessments in other content areas is not reported to be a regular practice at any grade level in the Lower School.

“One of the beautiful parts of Teacher's College is that their assessment is rolled in. And student assessments are really, really powerful. Especially a student's assessment that can be tracked longitudinally. Now that we have running records in place, we have a common reading assessment at PVA for K through 5 which it seems like we've been doing for a long time, but we haven't. It started the year that I started in this job.”(A1)

“What would be great would be to collect data systematically. You would have a beginning, middle, and end of your writing samples. The ERB assessment that they do now? It's not even done at the right time with the right grade level. So, I mean what do you do what that data? That doesn't even make sense.” (S3)

“We did the IRI which wasn't very good. We did the ERB in third and fifth, but our kids are not taught how to take a test. It's not even given for the right grades. They're not exposed to how to take a test, so they don't know what to do. I don't find that information accurate. There was nothing useful. It was all anecdotal. There was no hard data.” (T7)

“Based on what I've heard from parent feedback, they don't understand how their kid is getting evaluated from year to year or even from teacher to teacher.” (T14)

“There's different ways [to measure student growth] which goes back to the accountability thing, which is the million-dollar question. It's like, 'How we're going to hold teachers accountable? Do we have standardized tests?' I don't know.” (T11)

“Then I looked at the report card, I was like, 'Appreciates Hawaiian Studies.' I was like, 'Well, that doesn't help me at all.' Then I ended up getting one-on-one meetings with everyone. I took a personal day and did that. I find that here I am trying to assess these skills along the way but then it's not necessarily reflected in the report card. I don't know how well the report card reflects actually what we're doing in a classroom. It's very broad. Maybe that's on purpose.” (T2)

The logic of confidence is instilled in PVA teachers. Meyer and Rowan (1977) suggested “educational organizations lack close internal coordination, especially in the content and methods of what is presumably the main activity -- instruction” (p. 79). The construct called “the logic of confidence” is operationalized to create an assumption that both parties (faculty and school) bring to each other the earnest belief that everyone is, in good-faith, doing what they are supposed to be doing. The result is that the supervision of teachers is de-emphasized and confidence that the job is getting done is employed (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

The faculty at PVA reports that they are regularly being told how wonderful the school is, and how special and talented the faculty are. There are many instances where this is perceived to be true. However, the result has been to create a culture of fear and competition for some teachers. Admitting or reaching out for help is seen as a sign of weakness. Another teacher reported the competitive nature of PVA faculty members. Research supports that competition may be an attempt to be designated, and retain that designation as legitimate. Alternately, other teachers interpret the lack of supervision as permission to create their own programming for their students, regardless of directives from the school administration. The logic of confidence is arguably more detrimental to the faculty because it promotes privacy and competition rather than trust and honesty.

“I think there are teachers who feel like they're flailing in actual assessment that we're all using. Nobody wants to be the one to say -- I think people are embarrassed. They don't want to be the one to say, ‘I need more guidance,’ because we've been taught to feel like you were hired to teach here because we're so awesome.” (T1)

“I think that's also hard for teachers who have been somewhere for a long time and even having it be a Pacific View name. The feeling I've gotten from some of the veteran teachers, they have said, ‘I've arrived. I'm here. If I'm here, I must be good at what I'm doing, so don't mess with what I'm doing.’” (T10)

“What I noticed in the middle school is a lot of people seeming like, ‘What I do is great,’ but, really, I think, they're very insecure and they don't want to be observed for that reason. They don't want people to ask them what they're doing or borrow their lessons or just collaborate because there's a sense of insecurity of, ‘Well, I don't actually know if what I'm doing is the best.’ But no, it is the best because it's PVA, so it must be the best. Well, it's not about being the best, but if we had some common understandings, it would make this all a lot less stressful.” (T13)

“It is such a competitive environment. There is a level of competition. I think competition does have something to do with the lack of sharing. That, ‘That's my idea,’ versus, ‘This is our ideas for the kids.’ There is a sense of ownership over just like finding new ways to do things. I can't describe. I've never experienced anything like it at any other school I've ever worked at. Every other school, we actually would do the sharing of the work together and be like, ‘Okay, I'll make a set of 50 then so that we're covered for that. You're going to do this.’ It's not like that here.” (T4)

“This year I shared a unit with another teacher. I think she liked it. That was cool. But also -- I don't know what it is -- I think there's a little bit of maybe a little fear of being in the spotlight, at least that I have. I've come to that conclusion at this school that I'd like to remain out of the spotlight. You don't want to promote yourself too much. People don't like that.” (T11)

“I would say that departmentally we're not very good at that right now. We've gotten a little bit more into the management of facilities and structures and stuff and less about where are we on our actual learning outcomes. Having a definite dialogue on that, where are we in the concept of instruction K-12, we don't have that kind of dialogue. Nobody wants to be wrong, so the concrete stuff is easier to talk about.” (S2)

“I'm just hoping teachers are willing to admit that they don't know something, and they're okay trying something, and they're not closing the doors and saying, ‘I'll have the box in my room, but I'm not going to use it.’ That worries me too.”(T10)

Faculty members at Pacific View feel an accountability to the school and the parent community. Embedded within the constructs of logic of confidence and loose-coupling, there is a desire for the school to maintain its standing in the community and to retain its reputation as one of the elite private schools in the state. The school boasts an updated physical plant and significant financial resources. Teachers perceive that there are influential community members, alumnae and parents who leverage their positions and maintain high expectations for the school. Faculty and administrator respondents both reported feeling pressure to be accountable to parents and the community.

“The only way that I've been able to think of so far is in the articulation of what we do and making that articulation public, there is some degree of accountability now on behalf of families who actually read the documents, but we are always hesitant to put things in writing and we're always careful about what we say and what we do because we don't want to pin ourselves into a corner.”(T8)

“That we're floundering and that even prospective teachers are hesitant and sometimes reluctant to apply because they don't know exactly what they're getting into and they don't know if they want to leave what they currently have to enter this messy mix. It's scary to think that. I think the fact that we continue to have high demand and full enrollment is more the fact that we are Pacific View Academy than anything else. They like the name. It's the name, not anything behind the name. It's just they want a diploma that has that on there because it holds some degree of cache. To be honest, unless

something shifts with this new leadership, we are living on borrowed time and that it's only a matter of time before we're going to start to see enrollment or demand fall.” (A4)

“PVA has had a wonderful reputation, but I do think that’s changing. I think we have to be so careful. We can’t just keep resting on our laurels. We’ve had so many people applying, applying. We’ve got really good kids. We need to be able to prove we do what we say we do.” (T4)

“I feel we like to say that it's the supervisors and the department chairs but I feel perhaps what I'm feeling is very ultimately accountable to the parents. I've certainly seen parents flex their muscles not necessarily in my class but we do cater to at least a certain group of parents.” (T11)

“From the outside, PVA looks like Mecca. This is where everybody wants to come. And having had my child come, holy moly, we're a mess. I think we've been -- it sounds like we've been that way for a really, really, really long time, if maybe not always. And so, having this articulation and trying to have this vertical and horizontal coherence is something that this place has never had. And so, it's not going to happen overnight. We're in that messy place.” (T14)

Finding #4

Participants described high levels of balkanization, or organized subgroups, within the larger community. Teachers reported that sometimes the balkanization occurred because of philosophical differences, physical separation on campus, or because there was not a culture of collaboration. Similarly, respondents felt that the lack of a cohesive curriculum made collaboration difficult since colleagues were not always working together towards a common goal. Recent efforts by the administration to develop a professional learning community were met with mixed responses, although participants did express that they would like to work in a more collaborative and collegial environment, especially when trying to align curriculum within grade-levels and with adjacent grade-levels.

Balkanization v. Collaboration

The Pacific View Academy campus is set on over seventy acres of land. The K-12 school is comprised of several distinct divisions that occupy different parts of campus. There are some

shared facilities such as the cafeteria and the athletic complex. The school has separate libraries for the high school and the lower school. There are also distinct groups of classrooms and areas of campus that house the primary students, the elementary students, the middle schoolers and the high school students.

In an attempt to create more interaction between teachers, the administration developed a professional learning community (PLC) plan that grouped K-8 teachers into mixed-grade level cohorts that met periodically throughout the school year to share curricular plans or lessons that they were developing. Cohorts met six times, which was approximately once every six weeks, during after school meetings.

“If we were doing that as a department, I think we would all feel more satisfied with what we're doing. We would feel more confident. We would feel open to people coming in because there's a clear understanding of what are you trying to accomplish. So, when someone comes to observe you, it's not just like this minute in -- it's like with the PLC observations. I'm seeing a 30-minute snippet and there's no context. The teachers are not able to articulate necessarily, I'm sure some can and that's great, but to articulate how this fits into a bigger picture.” (T14)

“I'd like to spend time with my grade-level colleagues. Instead, I'm working with a sixth-grade music teacher. Cool. I can play an instrument. I'm interested. Yay! But at the end of the day I'm checking off the box and I'm moving on. Yes, I have fostered a little bit of a relationship with my PLC partner, a little bit. She came and observed me for 20 minutes one time. I don't know. It hasn't been wildly productive.” (T13)

“I find the PLC to be tedious. Those conversations are okay, but like, ‘I'm going to go visit somebody in [another] grade.’ Fine. I've visited classrooms. It's not that relevant, just not relevant. They're good teachers and everything. They do stuff. They're all good. That's great. Or if they came and saw me, they'd be like, ‘Oh, kind of what I expected.’ That's not the same thing as actually having a collaborative group thing.” (T6)

Teachers at Pacific View Academy reported that one of the biggest obstacles for collaboration is physical proximity on campus. There are not many opportunities for faculty in different grade levels to interact informally on a daily basis, aside from teachers that might be at certain adjacent grade levels. Similarly, the nature of teaching the younger students is such that teachers spend most of their day in self-contained classrooms and are responsible for their group

of students almost exclusively. The middle school teachers report that their work is less isolating because they are departmentalized and share a group of ninety students.

Regular faculty meetings are held once a week after school and at those times, grade levels may gather to discuss procedural information or curricular goals. For some grade levels, the physical spaces are organized in such a way that teachers are paired or grouped as a team, which helps to foster connections and collaboration between partners or small groups of faculty. There is a high level of variability between the levels of collaboration that are experienced by faculty at PVA. Some teachers report that their partnerships or grade-levels are extremely collaborative, while others report high levels of balkanization.

“I did reach out to the next grade’s teachers and ask, ‘When our students are coming down from our grade, what are some things that you see may not transfer or you wish we touched on more?’ So, I did reach out to a couple of [those] teachers myself just to find that, but it is such a separation. I’ve never been in a school where you’re that far away from the grade level above. Usually you are constantly going down the hall or touching base with those teachers. It is so separate, and I don’t know any of them yet, except for those few that I’ve built relationships with.” (T10)

“It’s like a big family get-together where the annoying cousin would be there, but still family. It was just this really close-knit group. Then the new structures got built and the only time I see these teachers that I work with is when you force yourself to leave your room, but you don’t see anybody else unless you do something else like coach, to walk across campus or just make it a point to just walk because you’re in your room. Everybody has their own room and we’re all cut off from each other.” (T12)

“Even the Deans now, for the middle school deans, the offices were always so separated. They have to be in proximity to the kids, so you have one in 6th, you have one in 7th and in 8th, which is great. Parents can see them, but when things come up, they’re solo. They fly solo. They’re on their own as an administrator, making decisions -- they pick up the phone and whatever, but there are times when they can’t run over and there are times when they can’t ever find the other people, so where do they go? When things come up, they could do a quick consult without having to drop everything or run around like a chicken without a head trying to find people.” (A4)

“Again, middle school, part of the culture changed because you’re on a four-person team. You’re not isolated. I think sometimes it’s difficult for the younger grades where you really are alone in your classroom sometimes with your kids all day long. To really get a perspective outside of what you’re doing, we haven’t created time for that.” (A3)

“I never felt such supportive colleagues who are so open with their materials. We meet once a week and we get all on the same page. If we're not on the same page, we share things. If we have a question and something is not working well then, they can help you figure that out. As far as colleagues go, I am in heaven. I think that everybody here is similar to me.” (T15)

Pacific View Academy teachers perceive a certain amount of balkanization that has to do with philosophy or personal relationships. As with many independent schools, the school community is very close and often described as a “family”. Teachers participate in non-academic activities like coaching or volunteer for school activities like the Parent-Teacher Association or various fundraisers. Respondents reported that these casual connections contribute to their standing in the school community and may contribute to collegial relationships. Conversely, respondents reported that there are groups of teachers that work so closely with one another, to the exclusion of others, which creates difficulty when collaborative tasks or work is expected.

“So, it depends on the teacher. Some teachers are really I guess closer than others, and they'll maybe cluster that way. We did have formal training on getting along with people or different things like that. But I think you definitely have a [grade level] culture and a [different] grade culture. Even in this small area of campus, there's a huge philosophical divide. It's lessening as new people come in.” (T1)

“That's why we've just kind of gone into the group of four. Just at some point, you're just tired of people. It's just enough. Uncle.” (T5)

“I've worked with so many people across campus in many different capacities, which has been a really interesting experience. I feel like I know so many people, which a lot of people don't because they just stick to their factions.” (T13)

“I mean a handful. There're over twenty-five teachers up here. So, we've got a close group of just a few, and we share a lot. (T8)

“Sometimes people are tapped to lead discussions. Then it looks like this faction is taking over. It's like, ‘No, the team leader should be learning that.’ If we just would look at each other as just human beings and go like, ‘Let' just all work together for the benefit of the kids,’ we would be so much better off.” (T6)

Pacific View Academy is one of a few large private schools in Hawai'i. Its reputation is considered to be elite in the community and many of the faculty and administration are alumnae

of the school. The school is perceived to be a leader in education and often takes on new curricular initiatives. The school has a robust professional development fund, but due to its location in the Pacific, development opportunities on the United States mainland or in foreign countries can be costly. Some faculty members reported a culture of isolation or insularity at Pacific View, which suggests that not only the teachers have difficulty with collaboration, but the school itself also would benefit from interaction with other institutions.

“I think the biggest difference -- and I do sense such change -- is that people can go off and investigate anything they want, but there isn't that sense of sharing back. I know a lot of people went to the Kennedy Center over the summer. There was a lot of Makery stuff. I haven't heard one thing. Nothing's been shared in masses to like, 'Oh, something to try in your classrooms.'” (T4)

“I'm not saying that the only way you can work here is if you were born and raised here, but you have to understand what it's like to live in this state and what's valued in this state. When you hire somebody with a, it's horrible to say, but the mainland attitude, it doesn't fit in here.” (T12)

Faculty members in the Pacific View Academy Lower School realize the value of collaboration and reported they wished that they had more structures in place to facilitate a more collegial work environment. Teachers recognized that their students benefit when teachers work together toward common goals. Some of the obstacles to collaboration remain physical proximity and time, philosophical differences, lack of a shared curriculum, and a culture of privacy. Participants stated that collaboration should occur not only within grade levels, but also between grade levels creating both horizontal and vertical alignment.

“But again, it's like from team to team, if we're not communicating grade level to grade level, that's a problem for the kid.” (T14)

“I don't think that the way we have it structured time-wise and resource-wise and all that is working very well at all right now. I'd like to be more of a team. I really like collaborating. I think it's really good for teachers and it's really good for kids. I'd like to see more teams actually collaborate instead of be in their own bubbles both team wise and department.” (T9)

“Vertical alignment would be so impactful too. The lack of conversations that people are not having is mind blowing. I am just fascinated with that adjacent grade teachers are not talking to each other about this stuff. But they're practicing the May Day hula every day after school together. I mean it's just like their kids grew up together. They're alumni. They're classmates. It's just so crazy.” (S1)

“Because then, we'll have common language. Well, at least have, hopefully, a generalized scope and sequence that's the same. Maybe we're all working on whatever it is; geometry and math. How cool would that be that maybe our entire cluster is working on geometry at the same time? We could be like, 'Oh, look at that.' Then even the kids would probably naturally start to have conversations about it. But we're just so all over the place right now. Yeah, I think it's unfortunate.” (T5)

“Then we got teachers all doing different things. There's no alignment. Then we're supposed to spend forty-five minutes in a meeting and come to some consensus? That's not going to work because we don't observe each other; we're not talking. It's not collaborative. It's just, 'We're in the meeting. What do you we need to get done for administration? We've written it down. Cool. Done.' Then everybody goes back to their bubbles.” (T13)

The respondents for this study express the opinion that collaboration is useful and will help bring cohesion to the curriculum. The methods and structures for creating a culture of collaboration instead of privacy and balkanization are not evident according to the teachers that participated in the study. While they recognize more collaboration is needed, it is also acknowledged that there is a strong history of isolation and participants are not sure how to overcome the tension between balkanization and collaboration.

“Again, the collegial nature of the conversations is something I know we're trying to work toward. That's what we're working toward. It's hard to practice collegiate conversations when there's no content around meeting -- there's no problem of practice.” (A4)

“I think we're heavily funded, very much supported and being able to get whatever you're wanting to get. But there's just not a level of, I don't know, trying things on together. There's something about shared experiences that builds the continuity of communication in trying things and be like, 'Oh, how did you do that?' I think that's what's missing, but I'm not sure how to get there.” (T4)

“There are pockets of magnificent stuff going on. Even within those teachers who are resistant, they do magnificent things, but there's not a cohesive strength that goes through everything.” (T7)

“So why are we being so secretive about what happens in our classrooms? Maybe because there's not a whole lot of alignment. And so what teachers are teaching are things that they've come up with on their own, rather than collaborated together to create. Until we create a culture of trust, we'll never be able to collaborate.” (T3)

Finding #5

Participants described instructional leadership came from various members of the Pacific View Academy faculty. The majority of respondents perceived that they sought instructional leadership from colleagues within their divisions rather than from the Lower School administration. Respondents in this study thought that the Lower School administrators were responsible for making curricular decisions and managing implementation on new initiatives and policies. Faculty members reported confusion about the roles and responsibilities of the current administrators.

Instructional Leadership v. Instructional Management

Instructional leadership at Pacific View Academy is present in various forms. Most respondents in this study indicated that they look to trusted colleagues for instructional leadership on a regular basis. In particular, teachers in self-contained classrooms reported that teachers in their divisions had different areas of expertise, and therefore, they sought out different instructional leaders depending on where they felt they needed inspiration or guidance.

The Lower School Administrative Team (LSAT) is comprised of the Principal, two Assistant Principals, and six Administrative Deans. At the time of the study, the Principal was in her third year as the leader of the Lower School. Her predecessor had served as the Lower School Principal for seventeen years before her and was described by respondents as a “visionary”. The two Assistant Principals in the Lower School each were in their second year as

part of the LSAT at the time of the study. The Assistant Principals also carried the titles of Dean of Curriculum and Dean of Faculty respectively.

The Administrative Deans at PVA oversee specific grade levels. At the time of this study, their titles had been changed from Supervisor to Administrative Dean. The change in titles accompanied a shift in responsibilities also, which were communicated to faculty along with the responsibilities for the Assistant Principals. Participants in the study reported that the addition of administrators and the shift in roles and responsibilities created confusion for faculty members.

“I think I wasn't as clear as to what their role was when I was hired really. I knew that I had a principal. I had an assistant principal. I had a supervisor, but I even asked at the beginning of this year, if I want to go do a professional development or I am wanting to apply for something, who do I put as my reference on my application for something? Those were still kind of unclear, and nobody else was really sure.” (T10)

“I don't know what their roles and responsibilities were before, and I don't know what their roles and responsibilities are now. I have no idea, no clue. It appears that they feel they've been demoted in some way, and that they may have been more evaluative to the teachers, and now they've lost that ability. But I think if that is the case, their interpretation is grossly misrepresented because it doesn't mean they don't go into classrooms anymore. They don't go into any classrooms. They don't know what is happening because they are not even going into a classroom. So that culture of the leadership position, I don't understand it. I don't see them in leadership roles. If what their intention is to lead their teachers, I don't see that. They'd probably benefit from leadership training, but I don't know.” (S1)

“Most recently there was a change with the new principal. And then a year later, I think, the addition of two assistant principal positions. I know for sure those assistant positions didn't really have clearly defined roles. I think that transition over those couple of years where things were being figured out at that higher level, it trickled down to a lot of confusion at the faculty level, and us trying to guess who are we supposed to go to for certain things, what do they actually want.” (T14)

“I'm blaming the way that the new admin positions have been framed. I don't think it's been clear. I don't see -- and obviously because who knows? I'm sure they're doing tons of stuff that's important. But as a teacher, I don't feel supported by the [Dean of Faculty] and I don't feel supported by the [Dean of Curriculum]. That's just my experience. If I have a question, should I be able to go to [the Dean of Curriculum] and go in his office and ask him? I would think so, but I don't. I'm not going to. When I have a question, I talk to my colleagues or my co-department head. I figure it out.” (T13)

“There’s been a shifting in the dean role. It’s been more like a student support role. The addition of the assistant principals has been helpful but we still haven’t worked out all of their job descriptions and that lack of clarity. You would think having two more people onboard would be that much less but it’s actually not. It’s actually made life more complicated because it’s a flat structure but the titles aren’t flat and none of the faculty know that. That gets in the way of making change.” (A3)

“Too much administration. I think that if you look at the fact that there are probably two or three times more administrators now that are less visible, I don't think that's a good thing. I think that you look at those people as leaders, and how everybody leads is differently. But like anything, it's about relationships and connecting with people. To the extent that those leaders are not connecting with people by being visible and interacting with them and seeing what's going on in the classrooms, I think that's a problem.” (S2)

The new administrators in the Lower School were installed following the tenure of the previous principal who had served the school for seventeen years. He was described by respondents as an educator who had vision, but was unable to carry out the vision for various reasons, some of them being the strong culture of autonomy at the school, and some being related to other aspects of change management that were not structurally in place. In terms of instructional leadership, respondents perceived that the change in administration left opportunities for teachers to seek instructional leadership from colleagues while the new administration took time to find its footing.

“Other teachers. For me, it's other teachers. I think that we've recently hired a couple of assistant principals that I respect for their ability to communicate instructionally. They were, I think, leaders in the classroom, and I think that they have continued to try and keep that mindset in their new positions. I think it's a little challenging for them but they're competitive people and they're looking to constantly find ways to instructionally make it better and continue to be the instructional leader. I thought our previous principal was an instructional leader.”(S2)

“I guess one of the things is the new principal and assistant principals, the two assistant principals are both pretty young, and that they continue to be patient and keep working at it because I think they're on the right track. They truly are aimed at connecting to and relating to teachers. I think they listen. They allow everybody to have a voice. I think that that's a good thing. My hope is that they have a support system, that they have people who are lifting them up. My hope is that we as an institution become better at

lifting each other up rather than tearing each other down. We're really quick to point out the faults in one another.” (T11)

“Generally, our school is so diverse, so we have an issue of where to go for instructional leadership. But I think what happened is under the previous administration, they had a different focus and whether it was a good focus or not, there were a lot of things that needed to be done that we were not doing. Then you got a new administration who’s willing to attack those problems. Yet there are so many. We have to give them some time.”(T14)

At the time of the study, respondents perceived that while the Lower School administration was committed to new educational initiatives, there was a focus on instructional management. Drawing on Weick’s (1976) writings about loose-coupling in schools, this seems consistent with the first years of a new school administration. Making changes to the managed aspects of school leadership is perceived as productive because the results are visible. Providing leadership for instruction is more involved, especially for a school that has minimal inspection and evaluation and high levels of teacher autonomy. Similarly, the lack of a uniform curriculum or common instructional vision creates a difficult platform for new administrators to lead from.

Participants recognized that the new leadership were seasoned educators that were promoted from within Pacific View’s ranks of faculty. Skepticism was reported from some faculty members about the new administration’s leadership experience, especially at the primary grade and elementary grades, for which the principal, nor the assistant principals, had significant experience.

“I think there's a lack of instructional leadership. Our leadership doesn't know the teaching and they don't know it at all at early childhood. We have been trying to tell them and they don't know this at all. None of them have any experience at all in this. Some of us have a lot. We have a lot to learn and we're very aware of how much we have to learn but we know a lot and we've got a lot of experience.” (T5)

“I think we have a leadership who is the most well intentioned, but is lacking experience in the early childhood. They’re trying to put their hats from their perspective in working in middle school and all of the rest here. But children learn very differently in [the primary grades]. Our developmental range is totally different.” (T4)

“It’ll help to have somebody specific about curriculum and stuff. It’s going to be helpful. I think one of the hard things is they’re all middle school people though. Hopefully, they can catch up on the elementary curriculum needs. So, I’m hopeful. I mean it’s been a hard couple of years.” (T10)

In terms of instructional management, respondents reported that the lack of supervision and accountability was something that the new administration needed to address. Furthermore, participants perceived that PVA had developed a culture where faculty voice and choice were valued to the extent that administrators had a difficult time initiating and ushering in changes, particularly those related to curriculum and instruction. Most changes in the Lower School were perceived to be primarily focused on policies and procedures that could be managed with varying degrees of success. Changes that related to curriculum, instruction or specific teacher assistance was described as a series of fits-and-starts or rarely addressed. Instead, the administration was perceived to take a wait-and-see or hands-off approach.

“I don’t know if it’s just the culture of the school to be like, ‘We’ll just wait until they retire. They’re going to leave in a few years, so let’s just ride it out,’ but riding it out means you’re behind not only the years that they’re in the position, but it’s really times -- because you can’t initiate anything until then, so you’re already even that much more behind. You don’t get a running start to doing this. You’re starting from nothing basically and that’s why change takes forever. By the time you really get anything going, the leadership leaves.” (A4)

“We’ve allowed, I think, too much of a voice without drawing a line of what’s acceptable and what’s unacceptable, and that’s across the board in many, many disciplines and stuff, whether it’s athletics or music or in the elementary classroom. I think we allow those few teachers too much of a voice that doesn’t always have the understanding for what’s best for children, educationally, behaviorally, or how they’re interacting.” (S2)

“I think a lot of people think, ‘Oh, this is just a phase. It will go away,’ That’s one. Or they’re scared of it so they won’t try, or they stick their toe in just a little bit, and then eventually become a convert. But I also think the administration, especially the academic deans, do not have the ability to lead in a way that people will buy into it; that they feel like, ‘Okay, I trust this person’. They’re speaking from a place of authenticity, empathy, and understanding. They don’t have it. They’re working above their ability. Incredibly wonderful human beings, but it doesn’t mean they’re good leaders.” (T7)

“Which is unfortunately a way to stop change or impact change is by doing nothing. That's the pieces. I think we're trying to change that culture. This isn't a buffet where you get to pick and choose from. This is something that we're all doing, all relying into. Setting that curricular vision is super important as well.” (A2)

“For a private school that should have the ability to fire and hire at will -- and we say that all the time. In your contracts, we can hire you -- we say that, but we don't act on it. I think therein lies some of the problem.”(T5)

“As far as change goes, a lot of people are just like, ‘Don't ask me to change. I'm not going to change.’ The people who I guess are in charge aren't necessarily willing or being very careful about how we go down those paths because of the fact that these people, who are long-term veterans, that are stuck or are seemingly unwilling to change are so deeply rooted in the system that any kind of upheaval creates chaos everywhere else and they could make things very difficult. So, we tread lightly, which stinks.” (T12)

Participants in the study recognized that the administrators are dedicated to improving curriculum and instruction in the Lower School for all students. It was perceived that the change in administration was difficult for both the new administrators, existing administrators, and faculty. The push to align curriculum and create a culture of collaboration was acknowledged to be a significant shift for the Lower School, yet one that will be ultimately welcomed.

“We’re trying to figure out – now what we’re trying to do is figure out how to undo all of that and rein it back in, and that’s where it almost feels like we’re waiting for the old guard to work their way out of the system. Then as we hire, we’re now hiring people that have the kind of perspective and philosophy that matches what we had aspired to at the outset.” (A4)

“It’s like at the end of the day, we need someone to take the lead on this. This is part of that administrative component I’m talking about. It’s not that they’re not doing a great job leading. They’ve already created incredible changes really quickly. I’m super proud of all the work that they’ve done.” (T11)

I like having freedom, but I also think that – it’s just like with the students. You want to give them choice and you want to give them freedom, but they need structure. They have to have it. If you don’t have it, then it’s just a free-for-all, and they’re not going to be happy because they won’t have an understanding of what’s expected from them. I feel it’s the same way for teachers. You want to have some freedom. But at the same time, if you haven’t clearly outlined what you’re hoping to get out of it, it’s just going to feel pointless. There’s so much more satisfaction in having this direction and having some guidance in how to get there, but then you bring your own style into it.”(T13)

Summary of Findings

This chapter presented the five major findings discovered during the course of this study. The findings reflected the research questions and were presented as dichotomous themes. Data collected from the qualitative interviews, observations, and document reviews helped the researcher understand the participants' perceptions of their experiences with the curricular alignment process in the Lower School at Pacific View Academy. Because the nature of this study followed practices of qualitative research, extensive quotations from the participants of the study were included in this chapter. The use of the participants' own words demonstrated the researcher's effort to represent the reality of their experiences.

The first finding of this study was that foundational philosophies and beliefs about education are varied at the school. Participants reported that teachers have varying ideas about teaching and learning and it was not perceived that there is a unifying set of beliefs or instructional vision that guides their work with children. Teachers perceived that the administration or school leadership is responsible for the development of a common instructional vision.

The second finding of this study was that faculty members perceived that the school was involved in a number of new initiatives that created a sense of fatigue. Teachers reported that they had a difficult time understanding where to prioritize their time or energy and received little training to support their new learning. Participants described a desire to focus on one curricular program for a prolonged period of time so they could attain proficiency with new pedagogy or curricular materials.

The third finding was that teachers at Pacific View Academy perceive very little external accountability for the work they do with children. Participants reported minimal formal

evaluation from administrators and perceived that the greatest sources of accountability were from parents or themselves. Standardized achievement data in the Lower School was reported to be collected seldomly, and teachers did not necessarily use data to inform their instruction.

The fourth finding was that faculty members perceive that there are few opportunities for meaningful, regular collaboration. Due to the size of the campus, and the schedule constraints, and differences in philosophies, teachers tend to gravitate to balkanized groups. According to participants, the administration has made efforts to encourage collaborative work with limited success.

The final finding of the study was that sources for instructional leadership within the Pacific View Lower School are varied. Faculty members reported confusion about the roles of some of the current administrators and indicated they were more likely to seek instructional leadership from colleagues. Respondents perceived that the current administrators were managers rather than leaders.

In order to explore the central problem of this study fully – How does a large independent school manage the tension between teacher autonomy and curricular alignment? – the researcher examined the relationship between the original research questions, the conceptual framework, and the major findings. This process resulted in the identification of analytic categories discussed in Chapter V.

Chapter V

ANALYSIS

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this case study was to explore with 27 faculty members, the perceptions of the curriculum development process at a large independent school. Specifically, this study focused on the systems in place to facilitate a cultural shift from teacher autonomy to curricular alignment. Particular attention was paid to perceptions about how administrators at the school negotiated the curricular initiative and addressed faculty development and leadership. It was hoped that the findings from this study will result in a deeper understanding of the perceptions from faculty members on change initiatives at the school, and will help administrators address underlying tensions that may be impeding the drive to align curriculum in the Lower School. The findings will be of interest to both faculty members and administrators at Pacific View Academy. The findings will also be of use to educators at other independent schools that are involved in change initiatives that involve shifting a culture of teacher autonomy to one of alignment and collaboration.

The study posed the following research questions; the findings of which were presented in Chapter IV:

1. What is leadership's role in curricular change?
2. How are curricular decisions made at a large independent school?
3. How are the tensions between creative autonomy and curricular alignment addressed?

4. What are teacher perceptions of the curricular change process?
5. Who or what is driving the shift from curricular autonomy to curricular alignment?

Five major findings were uncovered through the data collection of this study. Each finding revealed corresponding tensions that contributed to the push-and-pull between teacher autonomy and curricular alignment at the school:

1. Common Instructional Vision v. Disconnected Philosophies: Participants described personal educational philosophies and acknowledged that at the time of the study, there was not a universally agreed upon instructional vision for the PVA Lower School. The lack of a common vision created opportunities for teachers to cultivate significant autonomy with respect to instructional practices and to develop curriculum based on their personal experiences, strengths and philosophies.

2. Competing Initiatives v. Focused Development: Participants described multiple new curricular initiatives that were introduced to faculty that created conflicts for deciding where to prioritize their time and energy. Similarly, professional development devoted to new initiatives was described as inadequate given the scope of the changes that were being asked of faculty. Teachers desired to focus their efforts on one initiative with ongoing related professional development.

3. Accountability v. Logic of Confidence: Participants described very few formal accountability measures at PVA. There is currently no formal teacher evaluation system in the Lower School, and collecting standardized data is not a regular practice at any grade level. Teacher respondents described high levels of trust that they were fulfilling their duties as faculty members with minimal inspection. Participants perceived the highest levels of accountability came from parents and not school administrators or

colleagues. Participants also reported that accountability came from different places, such as accountability to self, accountability to colleagues, and accountability to the school.

4. Balkanization v. Collaboration: Participants described high levels of balkanization, or organized subgroups, within the larger community. Teachers reported that sometimes the balkanization occurred because of philosophical differences, physical separation on campus, or because there was not a culture of collaboration. Similarly, respondents felt that the lack of a cohesive curriculum made collaboration difficult since colleagues were not always working together towards a common goal. Recent efforts by the administration to develop a professional learning community were met with mixed response, although participants did express that they would like to work in a more collaborative and collegial environment, especially when trying to align curriculum within grade-levels and with adjacent grade-levels.

5. Instructional Leadership v. Instructional Management: Participants perceived instructional leadership came from various members of the Pacific View Academy faculty. The majority of respondents perceived that they sought instructional leadership from colleagues within their divisions rather than from the Lower School administration. Respondents in this study thought that the Lower School administrators were responsible for making curricular decisions and managing their implementation. Faculty members reported confusion about the roles and responsibilities of the current Lower School administrators.

The findings presented in Chapter IV were drawn directly from twenty-seven face-to-face, in-depth interviews with full-time faculty members at Pacific View Academy. Participants' roles in the school included classroom teachers, specialists, and administrators, some of who

were also parents of students in the school. This chapter is designed to describe and understand the findings in more detail and to discuss the implications of change initiatives at the school. In order to refine and organize the findings from the previous chapter, the researcher distilled the findings into two analytic categories that supported the further analysis and interpretations. These categories are explained as follows.

1. Philosophical underpinnings: Faculty members within Pacific View Academy have varied beliefs about education and are not guided by a universal instructional vision for Lower School students.
2. Organizational mechanisms: The accountability, professional learning, and administrative structures at Pacific View Academy are perceived to impact the curriculum alignment initiatives within the Lower School.

These analytic categories will be discussed further in this chapter and will be connected to the original research questions and the findings from Chapter IV.

Analytic Category 1

Philosophical underpinnings: Faculty members within Pacific View Academy have varied beliefs about education and are not guided by a universal instructional vision for Lower School students.

This analytic category was developed specifically when considering the first and second research questions, which involved administration's role in curricular change initiatives at the school. The researcher sought to understand how teachers perceived administrators, and those in leadership, helped to facilitate curricular changes, how those changes were conceived, decided upon, and ultimately communicated to faculty. In response to both research questions, a majority of respondents reported that they were not clear how leadership was involved in decision

making, nor was there a clear understanding for what drove the decision-making process for curricular changes and alignment initiatives. Participants perceived new leadership, parental pressure, market competition, and an institutional desire to remain relevant as drivers for curricular changes.

According to participants in the study, the absence of a clear instructional vision for the Pacific View Lower School and a unifying philosophy of education contributed to a culture of teacher autonomy. Although an instructional vision and an educational philosophy are considered to be separate concepts, both were considered to guide a teacher's work with children. The educational philosophy for the school was understood to be a general concept that was presented to the school community as part of the mission statement or guiding values that grounded all work with students. While a mission statement for Pacific View Academy does exist, it was reported by study participants that the mission is rarely cited when collaborating around curricular work. Instead, another set of goals, written by the current school president, is most often discussed in curricular meetings with administrators. The school goals written by the president have been distilled several times by the Lower School Principal in an effort to provide more context and understanding around the document. Teachers reported that the simplified goals were less ambiguous, but did not perceive that there was a collective understanding around the document, nor internalization or buy-in for the goals when curricular work was being initiated.

Unlike a philosophy statement, which often represents an idealistic concept for the role of education at a particular institution or within society, an instructional vision is crafted by school administrators to guide instructional methods and outcomes. An instructional vision may include curricular, instructional, and assessment goals in an effort to align those practices within a

school. At the time of the study, participants reported that an instructional vision for the Lower School had not been communicated by the current principal. Some faculty members described the previous Lower School administration's drive to become an institution grounded in inquiry-based teaching and learning methods. All teachers in the study that worked at the school during that time reported that the previous principal's vision was not realized due to difficulties with implementation that related to sufficient professional development and the principal's ability to work collegially alongside the faculty, however it was clear that he had a particular vision that he outlined consistently during faculty meetings and other gatherings.

Faculty members in the study reported that their work was not guided by a school-wide instructional vision. However, respondents did report they would welcome an instructional vision that would presumably guide their instructional decisions. Some participants indicated that it would be critically important for the instructional vision to be developed, and publicly supported, by the Lower School principal. Similarly, teachers felt the vision would require discussion and deep understanding and commitment by all teachers in order to align teaching and assessment practices. Accountability for upholding the vision was also described by faculty members as a way provide a foundation to ensure that all teachers were upholding the educational goals for all students in the Lower School.

Analytic Category 2

Organizational mechanisms: The accountability, professional learning, and administrative structures at Pacific View Academy are perceived to impact the curriculum alignment initiatives within the Lower School.

This analytic category was developed specifically when considering the third, fourth, and fifth research questions, namely how participants perceived curricular change initiatives were

conceived and managed. In response to the third and fourth research questions which sought to understand how the tension between teacher autonomy and curricular alignment was addressed by administration and perceived by faculty, the researcher asked participants to describe how they collaborate with colleagues, their feelings about collaboration, and their perceptions of curricular alignment. Additionally, the researcher sought to understand faculty members' involvement in change initiatives and their perceptions of change at the school. Participants in the study described a variety of perceptions, with all of them understanding the perceived need for curricular alignment, but the lack of necessary training and resources needed for teachers to collaborate to complete this work as desired by the school administration.

In response to the fifth research question, faculty members described the management of change as being incoherent and opaque, because it wasn't clear who or what was driving the shift to alignment. It was also reported that there was confusion for how curricular decisions were made, and that the organizational structures put in place in one division of the Lower School were not necessarily consistent with other divisions of the Lower School. Faculty members cited the wide variability between the responsibilities of the administrative deans and curricular committees to be an influencing factor for how curriculum programs and instructional pedagogy were implemented and evaluated. Organizational mechanisms that impacted respondents' perceptions of curricular alignment were professional learning, time for teacher collaboration, and accountability.

Faculty members at PVA overwhelmingly cited the resources for professional learning to be robust, however the systems in place for granting professional learning funds for off-campus learning did not support collaboration nor accountability, and faculty members felt that while the professional learning opportunities benefitted one or two colleagues, the learning was not widely

disseminated and usually confined to one or two teachers' classrooms. It was noted that due to the expense of traveling from Hawai'i, the desire to send cohorts of teachers to professional learning conferences was not usually the norm. Similarly, respondents were frustrated with the professional learning opportunities offered on-campus. Most participants felt that the offerings did not offer the depth or ongoing support needed to change or support changes in classroom instruction. Because it was perceived that the school was involved in a revolving door of initiatives, teachers were unclear where to focus their energy and did not feel that there was follow-up by the administration to advance practice.

Embedded within the respondents' observations about professional learning opportunities were the descriptions for how new faculty were onboarded upon being hired at Pacific View Academy. Teachers reported that they received very little training or support from the administration in the first years of their employment. There was not a formal mentoring plan nor teacher evaluation program in the Lower School. Coupled with the lack of explicit documented curriculum materials, teachers new to the school described their experiences as isolating and confusing. Many teachers reported that they relied on learning outcomes and curricular materials from previous schools where they've worked to help them plan their first, and possibly subsequent, years at Pacific View. The result was that autonomy within the curriculum was perpetuated and new teachers learned that collaboration was not part of the accepted school culture.

Participants in the study also acknowledged that there was a perceived culture of "outsider-insider" at the school. It was acknowledged that the school hires many of its alumnae to both administrative and faculty posts. It was posited that alumnae hires already possessed institutional knowledge that led them to be "insiders" at the school, thus leading them to find

colleagues that were more willing to welcome them to Pacific View Academy. Similarly, some respondents cited cultural differences between Hawaiians and colleagues from the mainland United States or foreign countries as creating a natural division at the school. Teachers new to the school reported their standings with colleagues with respect to their perceived “insider-outsider” status.

Time to collaborate with colleagues was also cited by participants as an organizational barrier to the curricular alignment initiative. Three days of the school year were designated to professional development, with the programming for those days being set primarily by administration to support K-12 learning. Faculty meeting time designated once a week after school was reported to be devoted to administrative agendas and teachers did not feel that ample time was set aside for colleagues to collaborate around one curricular strand. Moreover, each weekly after school meeting agenda was controlled by administrators and not teachers, and therefore time was not necessarily set aside each week for curricular work. Respondents in the middle school reported that their weekly meetings were often canceled depending on their Administrative Dean or curricular chairperson’s schedule.

The organizational mechanism in the Pacific View Lower School for accountability was reported to be underdeveloped or not present according to both faculty and administrators. The absence of a formal accountability system, whether through student data collection or teacher evaluation supported a healthy culture of teacher autonomy and hindered collaborative work. There was an acknowledged reluctance by some teachers to adopt new teaching practices and at some grade-levels, there was very little understanding for what was happening in classrooms next door to one another. While goals were set forth by the administration for curricular alignment, the lack of accountability mechanisms made the work

difficult. Furthermore, the administrative structure and roles were reported to be confusing and undefined by both faculty members and administrators themselves.

Summary of Analysis

The researcher considered the five findings for this study and converted them into analytic categories. Analytic Category 1 captured that Lower School faculty had diverse philosophies and visions for learning and instruction, and that there was not a commonly accepted philosophy of education nor an instructional vision for the work being done in grades K-8. Analytic Category 2 captured that organizational mechanisms such as administrative structure, time, accountability and professional learning had an impact on the curricular alignment initiative.

The analytic categories reflect the tensions between curricular autonomy and alignment reported by faculty members in the Lower School at Pacific View Academy. Participants perceived that there were both abstract and concrete challenges to achieving coherence and collaboration. The abstract concepts of philosophy and vision were reported to be primarily conceived and communicated by school leadership, however teachers were unsure that there were unifying statements that guided faculty work when planning and implementing curricular initiatives at the school. Concrete mechanisms were described in terms of administrative processes, such as planned professional development and accountability measures, like teacher evaluation and student assessment data collection. Faculty reported that these mechanisms were not well established and contributed to curricular autonomy.

Interpretation

The analysis of the interview data for twenty-seven participants was presented in the preceding section. This analysis leader to the following interpretive insights that are opinions and

potential explanations for each finding based on the literature and the researcher's experience. The interpretation seeks to identify and understand the meaning behind the analysis. The researcher engaged with the interpretation process as a way of making meaning of the study's findings.

Analytic Category 1

Philosophical underpinnings: Faculty members within Pacific View Academy have varied beliefs about education and are not guided by a universal instructional vision for Lower School students.

The participants in the study reported various understandings and interpretations of the educational philosophy of the school, and acknowledged a lack of instructional vision. The resulting perception is that the absence of a unifying understanding for the work being done at Pacific View Academy has led to increased teacher autonomy and balkanization. Teachers worked with colleagues they believed were like-minded and formed small pockets of trusted coworkers with whom they collaborated. With respect to curriculum and instruction, autonomy and balkanization often occurred within a single grade-level and between adjacent levels, subsequently thwarting attempts to create a cohesive and aligned curriculum.

With such a diverse and large faculty, it was expected that there would be small discrepancies between teachers' beliefs and the philosophy of the school. Given the longevity of many of the faculty at Pacific View Academy, it was expected that teachers were assimilated to the educational philosophy and instructional vision set forth by the school. It was clear however, that the work done by faculty members was not guided by unifying beliefs espoused by the school and subsequently instilled into the faculty-at-large. The variance in beliefs with respect to learning and instruction were widespread and occurred within and between smaller divisions

within the Lower School. For example, subjects perceived the philosophical differences between first and second grade as significant. Subjects attributed this variance not only to physical separation on campus, but also to the beliefs of faculty members as well as balkanization, which both prevented collaboration.

Providing teachers at the school with a clear, focused philosophy of education and instructional vision facilitates collaborative cultures. The absence of a universally adopted philosophy of education at the school allowed teachers to guide their planning and instruction according to their own beliefs about teaching and curriculum development. At the primary grades, for example, some teachers believed strongly in play-based instruction, while others subscribed to traditional rote learning strategies for kindergarten students. The divergence in educational philosophies led to balkanization and isolation within the grade-level.

Meyer, Scott & Deal (1992) recognized that school organizations are the basic units of knowledge production, and desire to maintain legitimacy within society. As a result, “school organizations go to the greatest lengths, not to accomplish instructional ends, but to maintain their legitimate status as schools. They seek accreditation, which depends on structural conformity with a set of rules that are professionally specified (p.54).” Following this observation, however, it is also noted that schools are communities of educators that depend on shared language, shared goals, and a common, universal understandings to attend to the goals of the school organization. Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972) wrote that the goals of education tend to be conflicting and ambiguous and the technology, or actual teaching, is often unclear. Furthermore, school organizations often try to replicate what others do, establishing a culture of conformity (Cohen, March & Olsen, 1972).

With respect to instructional vision or philosophy, the culture of autonomy supports the lack of common understandings and the resistance to an accepted set of norms for how education is viewed at the school. The philosophical statements that are promoted on the school's website are an example of the desire for PVA to adopt a vision because that is what is expected for a school organization. Faculty respondents confirmed that the mission is not internalized by teachers and is not a priority when planning curriculum or instruction. While teachers reported that they would welcome conversations around vision and philosophy, it was unclear whether that work would yield changes to the current work around curriculum development and alignment, or whether it would simply be perfunctory given the perceived lack of accountability.

Analytic Category 2

Organizational mechanisms: The accountability, professional learning, and administrative structures at Pacific View Academy are perceived to impact the curriculum alignment initiatives within the Lower School.

As reported by the participants in the study, professional development opportunities at the school were primarily offered in two ways. The first being on-campus programming that all teachers were expected to attend. Examples included the professional learning community cohort meetings (PLCs), or faculty professional development days where the school either brought in experts in the field to facilitate meetings or presentations, or days when the administration had designed tasks focusing on a specific school initiative in which teachers were expected to complete specific activities. The second mode of professional learning occurred when individual teachers applied for professional development grants to study topics of their own interest. Some of the grants are for single workshop experiences on-island, and other grants are for off-island institutes or courses that require travel to the mainland United States or other foreign countries.

Finally, some faculty members have ongoing grants that allow them to develop projects that may be longitudinal or incorporate small groups of teachers with similar interests or teaching assignments. This type of professional learning is usually curricular in nature and may or may not be shared with colleagues.

To address curricular autonomy at Pacific View Academy, teacher and administrators would benefit from ongoing, focused professional development that is inclusive and builds capacity within the faculty. Allowing certain grade-levels to develop curriculum for their students is appropriate only if the expectation is that they come back and have time to vertically align with faculty at other grade levels. Few opportunities are offered for this kind of work at a single grade level, and as reported by participants, this work has very little context, direction, or follow through. Moreover, the teachers reported that they don't feel they have adequate training to develop curriculum and the administrators that are leading the initiatives are not knowledgeable enough to provide instruction or support for the work. Adopting curriculum programs without providing professional development and ongoing support does not ensure that the curriculum will be taught with according to the expected learning outcomes. Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) advised that staff development is often not aimed to improve quality of instruction or attend to teachers' experience or stage of career. Instead, most professional learning is top-down and provided in a one-time session to help administration implement the next initiative quickly (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991). The result is that very few changes are made in terms of teacher behaviors with regards to teaching and learning.

Accountability at PVA continued to be a struggle according to the participants in the study. Specifically, the Lower School no longer has a formal teacher evaluation program, therefore teachers are not regularly observed according to explicitly communicated competencies

that were communicated by the school administration. This logic of confidence contributes to teacher autonomy, not only curricularly, but for other domains such as classroom management, planning, collegiality, instruction, assessment and other professional expectations. Simply put, the expectations for how teachers accomplish their work with students, families and colleagues are implicit to each individual teacher. Faculty members reported that they did not receive regular formal or informal feedback, and therefore, what one teacher determines is acceptable in terms of assessment or management may not be aligned with her colleagues. It was reported that there is no mechanism to regulate or align expectations and that feedback was generally in reaction to a complaint from a parent.

Similarly, participants in the study identified that there was a lack of accountability for administrators. Teachers who worked with multiple deans reported that the processes and policies set by individual administrators were not aligned and that it was often confusing to know how to address situations. It appeared to some faculty respondents that the deans themselves were not clear on their own roles and that like the teachers, they relied on their own understandings and beliefs to develop their intended administrative oversight. It was unclear to teachers whether administrators received regular feedback since classroom teachers were not offered formal opportunities to assess their supervisors or working conditions.

The administrative structure of the Lower School was reported to have changed with the arrival of the new principal in the 2015-2016 school year. In her second year as the leader of the division, she created two new assistant principal positions and placed them in charge of faculty and curriculum, respectively. Study participants reported that this shift to a new administrative structure was difficult because the roles for the new assistant principals were not clearly communicated. Likewise, the change in roles for the grade-level deans was similarly confusing.

The faculty and curricular responsibilities that had been under the purview of the grade-level deans were transferred to the assistant principals, but the shift was awkward and unclear and created a cumbersome transition to what had been perceived as a positive restructuring of the Lower School administrative team.

The organizational mechanisms at the school were reported to be confusing and ambiguous. Across the Lower School division, policies and expectations were inconsistent. Faculty participants reported frustration with the lack of accountability. They felt that the strong culture of teacher autonomy was a result of teachers creating their own systems for what they felt was best for students. The most accountability that teachers perceived was to parents, which was primarily reactive after a parent had voiced concerns. Moreover, participants felt that administrators were also beholden to parents and only provided feedback to teachers as a result of a parent concern.

The issues of accountability for teaching and learning connect to Weick's (1976) construct of the formal school organization as a loosely-coupled system, and Meyer & Rowan's (1977) theories of institutionalized organizations. According to the literature, the activities in an institutionalized organization can often produce conflicts that can lead to a loss of legitimacy. At PVA, the organization is readily accepted by the community and society as one of the premier schools in the state. The formal structures and activities at the school are often put on display, however the technical aspects, like teaching and learning outcomes are decoupled and professionalism is encouraged. As the researcher noted in the previous section, the goals and vision are ambiguous, thus buffering the discrepancies involved in the technical activities (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The logic of confidence, or reliance on good faith and professionalism, enable

the lack of accountability and assumes that teachers and administrators are performing their roles effectively.

Summary of Interpretation

Concepts from the literature were presented, accompanied by the researcher's observations, to interpret an understanding of the findings from twenty-seven semi-structured interviews with faculty members at Pacific View Academy. The two analytic categories presented represented conceptual beliefs and organizational mechanisms. The conceptual beliefs included the desire by faculty for a common educational philosophy or instructional vision to guide their work with children. It was reported that there is a discrepancy amongst teachers about the goals for curricular development and alignment and instructional practices. The organizational mechanisms were related to policies and structures that were in place to facilitate work with students. Participants reported that the Lower School organization and structures that were in place were inadequate or ambiguous and did not positively contribute to their curricular work.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this case study was to explore how a large independent school manages the tension between teacher autonomy and curricular alignment. Particular attention was paid to the administrative role in the alignment process and the perceptions of faculty members and administrators involved in organizational change. Based on the five major findings, the researcher drew the following conclusions and made the following recommendations.

Conclusion 1

In order for a curricular alignment initiative to move forward, a common vision or rationale must be presented and come part of the collective understandings of the school faculty.

The educational philosophies of the teachers were diverse, prohibited collaborative work, and promoted balkanization and privacy. The lack of a common instructional vision that was routinely communicated and internalized fostered a pervasive culture of curricular autonomy.

Conclusion 2

While faculty members enjoyed the autonomy to deliver curriculum according to their strengths, curriculum alignment will be helpful to create a more collaborative culture in the school. The culture of privacy and competition espoused by independent school teachers allowed for students at the same grade level to be taught different curriculums with differing expected outcomes. Collaboration was limited to balkanized groups of teachers and did not ensure a similar experience for students throughout their educational journey

Conclusion 3

Structures for accountability must be put into place to ensure that curricular autonomy is controlled. Teachers at independent schools may be acculturated to a system of privacy and a logic of confidence. Without systems for accountability, teacher curricular autonomy will persist.

Recommendations

For practice

The recommendation for developing a common instructional vision acknowledges that educational organizations are loosely coupled systems where planned actions do not resemble the actual activity (Weick, 1976). When school administrations are reactive to events that occur with respect to teaching and learning, it can be unclear to faculty members how decisions are made and who is involved in developing policy that affects curriculum, amongst other activities around the school. By developing a collective understanding about the educational goals and philosophy, decisions for curriculum and instruction will be more explicit and unified, with the goal for promoting collaboration and alignment.

In developing a common instructional vision, school administrators can create a system for organizational learning by including many constituencies, while building capacity within the school to create a shared understanding for the goals of the school. The desired student profile will facilitate philosophical discussions regarding community values, beliefs, curriculum, and instructional practices. The collective action and collective expertise described by Little (1990) as joint work promotes interdependence and engagement. Furthermore, the nature of the work, if allowances are made for innovation, transcends the contrived aspects of collegiality, and may

create a collaborative culture where decision-making is decentralized and shared (Hargreaves, 1991).

For developing collaborative work

The recommendation for developing a culture of collaboration is grounded in the research that teachers working together benefits student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Moolenaar et al., 2012). As supported by research, many teachers are balkanized, choosing to work in small groups of faculty members with similar philosophies or expertise. This results in uneven development of curriculum within and across grade-levels. Allowing teachers to collaborate around shared-work that is meaningful and useful to their work with students helps to shift the culture from privacy and confusion to openness and alignment (Little, 1990).

It is recommended that administrators provide faculty explicit guidelines, sufficient professional development, and time to collaborate around curriculum development and alignment rather structuring professional learning networks that are perceived as contrived and ineffective (Hargreaves, 1991).

For accountability

The absence of an inspection of the technical aspects of work done with students is consistent with Weick's (1976) construct of educational organizations and loosely-coupled systems. The distinction between the formal and technical aspects of an educational organization are reflected in the lack of inspection of teaching and learning in schools. A clear system for accountability, whether it be student achievement data or teacher observation is imperative to track student growth and create an understanding for the work being done in classrooms. If the effectiveness of instruction is not measured using standard metrics, it is difficult for a school community to determine "how well the work is done" (Weick, 1976, p. 11).

Standardized student assessment data used in tandem with teacher evaluation may help administrators to gain an understanding for how instruction is delivered and help to provide curriculum committees with information needed to develop or choose curricular materials. Additionally, establishing a teacher evaluation system will provide administrators with opportunities to provide teachers with regular feedback and professional development opportunities to support the instructional vision at the school. Adopting accountability measures may also help administration to examine their own roles and to clarify responsibilities of school leaders.

For Further Research

The topic of how a large independent school manages the tension between teacher autonomy and curricular alignment will continue to be relevant as schools face accountability measures and competition from public sectors due to rising tuition costs and economic uncertainty. Further research on this topic would generate insight that would be of use to school organizations, administrators, teacher education programs, parents, and school faculty.

Further studies could also be conducted along the lines:

- This study included a sample of twenty-seven participants, across the Lower School and across individual demographics. Because of this, the researcher recommends that research be conducted with a larger sample of subjects to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how teachers and administrators perceive this tension.
- Research could be conducted along specific demographic or grade-level designations to determine whether experience or placement affect the perception of how curriculum alignment is developed within the Lower School.

- Another extension of the research could be to study the alignment process at multiple schools experiencing comparable tensions to determine what, if any, mechanisms promote a school culture of collaboration and alignment.
- Finally, the researcher recommends longitudinal studies be conducted so that more can be understood about how the administration at a large independent school manages the shift from a culture of teacher autonomy to curricular alignment.

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Appendix A: Invitation for Participation in Research Study

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you had a wonderful May Day and are now ready for the big push to the end of the school year. I realize that this is a busy time at school, but I am writing to ask for your help by participating in a research study. This study is being conducted as part of my Lower School Faculty Fellowship in conjunction with my doctoral studies at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. The purpose of this research is to help develop an understanding of how a large independent school negotiates the tension between faculty autonomy and curricular alignment through the lens of organizational change. As you may recall, this was one of the areas of opportunity that was identified during the WASC Self-study process that culminated in early 2017.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a faculty member or administrator in the Lower School who can provide unique insight into this topic. **Your participation is confidential and voluntary and you are free to answer any questions you'd like, to withdraw your consent and/or to discontinue participation at any time without penalty.** It is hoped that there will be at least twenty-five participants interviewed for this study, providing a wide representation of faculty perceptions.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, the time commitment will be approximately 45 minutes to one hour. The interview will consist of open-ended questions about your experience as a faculty member at our school and your perceptions and understandings of autonomy and alignment or coherence. **The interview will be scheduled at a time and place that is most convenient for you.** If you are available, I may also get in touch with you to cover any follow-up questions, although you are free to decline at any stage of the research. Other than potential discomfort in answering these questions, risks will be minimal, given these interviews are strictly voluntary and confidential and interview questions are open-ended. You will be given a \$5 Starbucks gift card as a token of appreciation for your participation.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me at: (e-mail) rwagner@punahou.edu or rwagner9@hawaii.edu or you may also contact my advisor, Dr. Stacey Roberts at sroberts@hawaii.edu. Contacting me for information does not obligate you to participate in the study. If you are interested in participating in this study, you may either contact me directly or give me permission to contact you by emailing me. I greatly appreciate your consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rebecca S. Wagner
Fifth Grade Teacher/Lower School Faculty Fellow



Appendix B: Informed Consent

University of Hawai'i Consent to Participate in a Research Project

Rebecca Wagner, Principal Investigator

Project title: From Curricular Autonomy to Curricular Alignment: A Process of Change in a Large Independent School

Aloha! My name is Rebecca Wagner and you are invited to take part in a research study. I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the Department of Educational Administration. As part of the requirements for earning my graduate degree, I am doing a research project. The purpose of my project is to understand how independent schools develop curriculum. I am asking you to participate because you may be involved in, or have valuable insight into the process of curriculum development at an independent school.

Activities and Time Commitment: If you participate in this project, I will meet with you for an interview at a location and time convenient for you. The interview will consist of 10-15 open ended questions. It will take forty-five minutes to an hour. The investigation will include questions like, "How are curricular decisions at the school made?" and "What knowledge do you think should be included in the school's curriculum?" After your interview is finished, there may be a possibility that I will contact you for a follow-up session to be scheduled at your convenience.

Only you and I will be present during the interview. With your permission, I may ask to audio-record the interview so that I can later transcribe the interview and analyze the responses. You will be one of about twenty people I will interview for this study.

Benefits and Risks: There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this interview or focus group. The results of this project may help improve the curriculum development and evaluation cycles to benefit future students and teachers. I believe there is little risk to you for participating in this research project. You may become stressed or uncomfortable answering any of the interview questions or discussing topics with me during the interview. If you do become stressed or uncomfortable, you can skip the question or take a break. You can also stop the interview or you can withdraw from the project altogether.

Privacy and Confidentiality: I will keep all study data secure in a locked desk and on a password-protected computer. Only my University of Hawai'i advisor and I will have access to the information. The University of Hawai'i Human Studies Program has the right to review research records for this study.

After I write a copy of the interviews, I will erase or destroy the audio-recordings. When I report the results of my research project, I will not use your name. I will not use any other personal identifying information that can identify you. I will use pseudonyms (fake names) and report my findings in a way that protects your privacy and confidentiality to the extent allowed by law.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. If you stop being in the study, there will be no penalty or loss to you.

Compensation:

You will receive a \$5 gift certificate to Starbucks for your time and effort in participating in this research project.

Questions: If you have any questions about this study, please email me at rwagner9@hawaii.edu or rwagner@punahou.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Stacey Roberts, at sroberts@hawaii.edu. You may contact the UH Human Studies Program at uhirb@hawaii.edu to discuss problems, concerns and questions; obtain information; or offer input with an informed individual who is unaffiliated with the specific research protocol. Please visit <https://www.hawaii.edu/researchcompliance/information-research-participants> for more information on your rights as a research participant.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign and date this signature page and return it to: Rebecca Wagner – Castle Hall

Upon receipt of signed consent, I will forward a copy of this form to you to keep for your records.

Signature(s) for Consent:

I give permission to join the research project entitled, *From Curricular Autonomy to Curricular Alignment: A Process of Change in a Large Independent School*

Please initial next to either “Yes” or “No” to the following:

_____ Yes _____ No I consent to be audio-recorded for the interview portion of this research.

Name of Participant (Print): _____

Participant’s Signature: _____

Signature of the Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Faculty Interview Protocol

Faculty Interview Protocol/Script Faculty Autonomy and Curricular Alignment in a Large Independent School

Researcher: *I'd like to thank you once again for being willing to participate in the interview aspect of my study. I am seeking to understand how faculty/administrators perceive the tension between autonomy and alignment (or coherence) at a large independent school. The aim of this research is to inform the school community about how a change process occurs at our school and how that change might be negotiated. Our interview today will be approximately an hour long during which I will ask you a range of questions about your experiences as a member of our school community.*

[review aspects of consent form]

*You have already completed a consent form indicating I have your permission (or not) to audio record our conversation. Are you still okay with me recording our conversation today? _____ Yes
_____ No*

If yes: Thank you! Please let me know at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record.

If no: Thank you for letting me know. I will only be taking notes of our conversation.

Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions? [Discuss questions]

If any questions arise at any point during this study, you can feel free to ask them at any time. I will be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

- Describe your position in the school. Formal title/How long have you had this position?
 - a. Other positions within the school? O
 - b. Other teaching or administrative positions outside the school?
 - c. Not an independent school?
- How would you describe the school, say, to a parent visiting this school for the first time who is considering our school as an educational option for their child?
 - a. History?
 - b. Affiliations (religious)
 - c. Student population (number, ethnicity, socio-economic level, special-needs, scholarships)
 - d. Grade levels served in the school, student-teacher ratio, number of classrooms per grade.
 - e. Co-Curricular offerings
 - f. Mission statement
 - g. Accreditations
 - h. Educational philosophy
- What do you appreciate most about being a faculty member at this school?
 - a. Compare our school to another school?

- b. Perks of being teacher at our school?

I'd like to ask you some questions about the change process at our school...

- Given your experience at our school, what have been some of the changes that you've seen that have been really positive for students and faculty?
 - a. How do you know positive?
 - b. How conceived?
 - c. Process? Who was involved? Time-frame?
 - d. How have improvements affected your life at our school?
 - e. Widely accepted as positive? What makes you think that?
 - f. How communicated to the faculty? Students? Parents?
- Given your experience at our school, what have been some of the changes that have been more difficult for faculty and/or students?
 - a. How do you know difficult?
 - b. How conceived? (Who?)
 - c. Process? (Who was involved? Time-frame? How implemented?)
 - d. How have these changes affected your life at our school?
 - e. Widely accepted as difficult? What makes you think that?
 - f. Actions were taken to accept or implement the changes? Actions helped? How do you know?
- Who or what do you think drives the change initiatives at the school?
 - a. Why do you think certain constituents involved?
 - b. Make a change process at our school go more smoothly?
 - c. Who involved?
 - d. Experience changing like?
- How do you think decisions about curriculum or other changes are made?
- As a faculty member in the Lower School, what is your role in the change process at our school?
 - a. What happens after initiated?
 - b. What support is particularly effective?
 - c. How has that help been offered?
 - d. How do you know a change has been successful?
 - e. What evidence is collected?
 - f. What happens if a change isn't successful?
- Who (position) at our school do you look to for instructional leadership?

The next set of questions focus more on curriculum and curricular change...

- When a new teacher is hired, what would you tell her/him about the curriculum?
 - a. How new teachers are supported?

- b. Documents?
 - c. Mentoring?
- Describe the most recent curriculum development/alignment process at your school.
 - a. How were you involved?
 - b. How other faculty members involved?
 - c. How often does the school review curriculum?
 - d. Who is involved in curricular change? (Or other changes?)
 - e. How do you feel when curricular (or other changes) are proposed?
- At our school, how do you know the teachers implement the stated curriculum?
 - a. Accountability?

Our school is tasked with negotiating the tension between teacher autonomy and curricular alignment or coherence...

- What does teacher autonomy mean to you in the context of your work?
 - a. Why do you think that ended up being an area of opportunity in the WASC self-study?
 - b. How do you perceive curricular alignment or coherence will change the teaching practice?
 - c. What do you think you have control over when making decisions about instruction and curriculum?
 - d. How do you anticipate the degree of alignment or coherence will be evaluated? (How will you know if curriculum is aligned?)
- Research confirms that many teachers choose to work in private schools because enjoy increased autonomy in the classroom. How do you perceive that teachers are receiving the alignment initiative? How do you know? (What do you think about the drive to align curriculum?)
 - a. How will alignment change your practice?
 - b. What decisions are being made with respect to curricular alignment?
 - c. Who is responsible for those decisions?
 - d. How do you think those decisions are being made?
 - e. How are those decisions communicated to faculty?
 - f. Who is involved in ensuring the curriculum is aligned?
 - g. As you understand it, what is the process for aligning the curriculum at our school?
 - h. What would make the process of curricular alignment better for you?
- In five years, what do you hope the Lower School program looks like with respect to teacher autonomy and curricular cohesion?

This concludes my set of interview questions. Are there any other thoughts you have on any of these questions that you'd like to talk about?

I truly appreciate your willingness to spend your time with me today. As noted earlier, I may want to contact you to follow up on our interview once I have time to reflect on our interview. Is that okay with you?

Thank you again for your time. Your insight is very valuable both to my study and our school.

Appendix D: Administrator Interview Protocol

Administrator Interview Protocol/Script Faculty Autonomy and Curricular Alignment in a Large Independent School

Researcher: *I'd like to thank you once again for being willing to participate in the interview aspect of my study. I am seeking to understand how faculty/administrators perceive the tension between autonomy and alignment (or coherence) at a large independent school. The aim of this research is to inform the school community about how a change process occurs at our school and how that change might be negotiated. Our interview today will be approximately an hour long during which I will ask you a range of questions about your experiences as a member of our school community.*

[review aspects of consent form]

*You have already completed a consent form indicating I have your permission (or not) to audio record our conversation. Are you still okay with me recording our conversation today? ____ Yes
____ No*

If yes: Thank you! Please let me know at any point you want me to turn off the recorder or keep something you said off the record.

If no: Thank you for letting me know. I will only be taking notes of our conversation.

Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions? [Discuss questions]

If any questions arise at any point during this study, you can feel free to ask them at any time. I will be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

- Describe your position in the school. Formal title/How long have you had this position?
 - a. Other positions within the school?
 - b. Other teaching or administrative positions outside the school?
 - c. Not an independent school?
- How would you describe the school, say, to a parent visiting this school for the first time who is considering our school as an educational option for their child?
 - a. History?
 - b. Affiliations (religious)
 - c. Student population (number, ethnicity, socio-economic level, special-needs, scholarships)
 - d. Grade levels served in the school, student-teacher ratio, number of classrooms per grade.
 - e. Co-Curricular offerings
 - f. Mission statement
 - g. Accreditations
 - h. Educational philosophy
- What do you appreciate most about being a faculty member at this school?

- a. Compare our school to another school?
- b. Perks of being teacher at our school?

I'd like to ask you some questions about the change process at our school...

1. Given your experience at our school, what have been some of the changes that you've seen that have been really positive for students and faculty?
 - a. How do you know positive?
 - b. How conceived?
 - c. Process? Who was involved? Time-frame?
 - d. How have improvements affected your life at our school?
 - e. Widely accepted as positive? What makes you think that?
 - f. How communicated to the faculty? Students? Parents?
- Given your experience at our school, what have been some of the changes that have been more difficult for faculty and/or students?
 - a. How do you know difficult?
 - b. How conceived? (Who?)
 - c. Process? (Who was involved? Time-frame? How implemented?)
 - d. How have these changes affected your life at our school?
 - e. Widely accepted as difficult? What makes you think that?
 - f. Actions were taken to accept or implement the changes? Actions helped? How do you know?
- Who or what do you think drives the change initiatives at the school?
 - a. Why do you think certain constituents involved?
 - b. Make a change process at our school go more smoothly?
 - c. Who involved?
 - d. Experience changing like?
2. Who or what drives decision making at the school?
3. How do you think decisions about curriculum or other changes are made?
4. As an administrator in the Lower School, what is your role in the change process at our school?
 - a. How do you anticipate which changes will more challenging than others?
 - b. What do you do when you perceive/know that a change is going to be particularly challenging for faculty?
 - c. What happens after initiated?
 - d. What process effective?
 - e. How has that help been offered?
 - f. How do you know a change has been successful?
 - g. What evidence is collected?
 - h. What happens if a change isn't successful?

- When a new teacher is hired, what would you tell her/him about the curriculum?
 - a. How new teachers are supported?
 - b. Documents?
 - c. Mentoring?

The next set of questions focus more on curriculum and curricular change...

5. From your experiences in education, how would you define curriculum?
6. Describe the most recent curriculum development process at your school.
 - a. How were you involved?
 - b. How were other faculty/admin members involved?
 - c. How often does the school review curriculum?
 - d. Who is involved in curricular change? (Or other changes?)
 - e. How do you feel when curricular (or other changes) are proposed?
- At our school, how do you know the teachers implement the stated curriculum?
 - a. Accountability?

Our school is tasked with negotiating the tension between teacher autonomy and curricular alignment or coherence...


1. What does teacher autonomy mean to you in the context of your work?
 - a. Why do you think that ended up being an area of opportunity in the WASC self-study?
 - b. How do you perceive curricular alignment or coherence will change the teaching practice?
 - c. What do you think you have control over when making decisions about instruction and curriculum?
 - d. How do you anticipate the degree of alignment or coherence will be evaluated? (How will you know if curriculum is aligned?)
7. Research confirms that many teachers choose to work in private schools because enjoy increased autonomy in the classroom.
 - a. How do you perceive that teachers are receiving initiative?
 - b. How do you know?
 - c. What decisions are being centralized with respect to curricular alignment?
 - d. Who is responsible for those decisions?
 - e. How are those decisions being made?
 - f. How are those decisions communicated to faculty?
8. In five years, what do you hope the Lower School program looks like with respect to teacher autonomy and curricular cohesion?

This concludes my set of interview questions. Are there any other thoughts you have on any of these questions that you'd like to talk about?

I truly appreciate your willingness to spend your time with me today. As noted earlier, I may want to contact you to follow up on our interview once I have time to reflect on our interview. Is that okay with you?

Thank you again for your time. Your insight is very valuable both to my study and our school.

Appendix E: IRB Approval

	UNIVERSITY of HAWAII[®] <hr/> SYSTEM	Office of Research Compliance Human Studies Program
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TO: Roberts, Stacey, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Educational Administration
 Wagner, Rebecca, PhD, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Educational Administration

FROM: Rivera, Victoria, Interim Dir, Ofc of Rsch Compliance, Social&Behav Exempt

PROTOCOL TITLE: From Curricular Autonomy to Curricular Alignment: A Process of Change in a Large Independent School

FUNDING SOURCE: NONE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2017-00635

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

This letter is your record of the Human Studies Program approval of this study as exempt.

On October 30, 2017, the University of Hawaii (UH) Human Studies Program approved this study as exempt from federal regulations pertaining to the protection of human research participants. The authority for the exemption applicable to your study is documented in the Code of Federal Regulations at 45 CFR 46.101(b) 2, 4.

Exempt studies are subject to the ethical principles articulated in The Belmont Report, found at the OHRP Website www.hhs.gov/ohrp/human-subjects/guidance/belmont.html.

Exempt studies do not require regular continuing review by the Human Studies Program. However, if you propose to modify your study, you must receive approval from the Human Studies Program prior to implementing any changes. You can submit your proposed changes via email at uhrb@hawaii.edu. (The subject line should read: Exempt Study Modification.) The Human Studies Program may review the exempt status at that time and request an application for approval as non-exempt research.

In order to protect the confidentiality of research participants, we encourage you to destroy private information which can be linked to the identities of individuals as soon as it is reasonable to do so. Signed consent forms, as applicable to your study, should be maintained for at least the duration of your project.

This approval does not expire. However, please notify the Human Studies Program when your study is complete. Upon notification, we will close our files pertaining to your study.

If you have any questions relating to the protection of human research participants, please contact the Human Studies Program by phone at 956-5007 or email uhrb@hawaii.edu. We wish you success in carrying out your research project.

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 An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution

Appendix F: Coding Legend

Code	Descriptor
Accountability	The set of aligned outcomes or expectations that students will know and be able to do.
Autonomy	The ability to make decisions about curriculum and instruction without agreement from peer educators or leadership.
Balkanization	Teachers working in isolation or in small groups without regular collaboration and communication.
Collaboration	Shared work to a common goal.
Competing Initiatives	New or existing directives that faculty members are expected to implement in their classrooms.
Accountability	Supervision of teachers to ensure student learning is happening and the curriculum is being taught.
Instructional Vision	A shared set of core beliefs and understandings to which a school community commits. Vision incorporates the educational philosophy, values, goals and outcomes for the school and its students.
Leadership	(n) The group of school administrators that inspire and motivate teachers by creating and facilitating a common vision for instruction. (v) The act of guiding and inspiring faculty.
Logic of Confidence	Educators can be trusted to perform their defined work activities without a need for close supervision.
Professional Development	Opportunities for educators to gain and improve the knowledge and skills important for their work with students.
Teacher-centered	The teacher is in charge of transmitting information to students. Student work is passive.

